

STATUS OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area



Mid-America Regional Council

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Harvard Center on the Developing Child, the early years matter because, “in the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second.” These connections are critical to helping a child succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The neural connections formed during this time “build brain architecture — the foundation upon which all later learning, behavior and health depend.”¹

If we want children in the Kansas City region to thrive in kindergarten and beyond, we must first understand these children, where they live and potential barriers to their future success. Many families struggle to access high-quality early learning programs for their children. The early learning community is adapting to new opportunities, including the expansion of pre-K programs offered in area school districts.

¹Center on the Developing Child (2009).

Five Numbers to Remember About Early Childhood Development (Brief).
Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.



The Status of Families and Children Report provides context for understanding the availability and quality of early learning services as well as equity and access issues that affect children and families in the nine-county Kansas City metropolitan area. This study focuses on five Missouri counties (Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray) and four Kansas counties (Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte). Some population data for the Kansas City region focuses on the 14-county metropolitan statistical area as identified in the U.S. Census.

This report compiles the most recent data available regarding population trends, economics, health, public assistance and early learning to provide a portrait of the early learning system in the Kansas City region. This research augments other reports such as the Mid-America Head Start Community Assessment and the Kansas City Pre-K Landscape Study to identify gaps between available services and needs, and establish community benchmarks for success. Ultimately this report will establish long-term and short-term goals and objectives for future investments in the early learning system.





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THE GRAND
MARSHALS

POPULATION TRENDS

The population in the Greater Kansas City is changing. In order to understand the needs of children under age 5, it is important to first understand the community context. This section provides context with a global illustration of the population trends in the region, and then examines the trends for children under age 5.

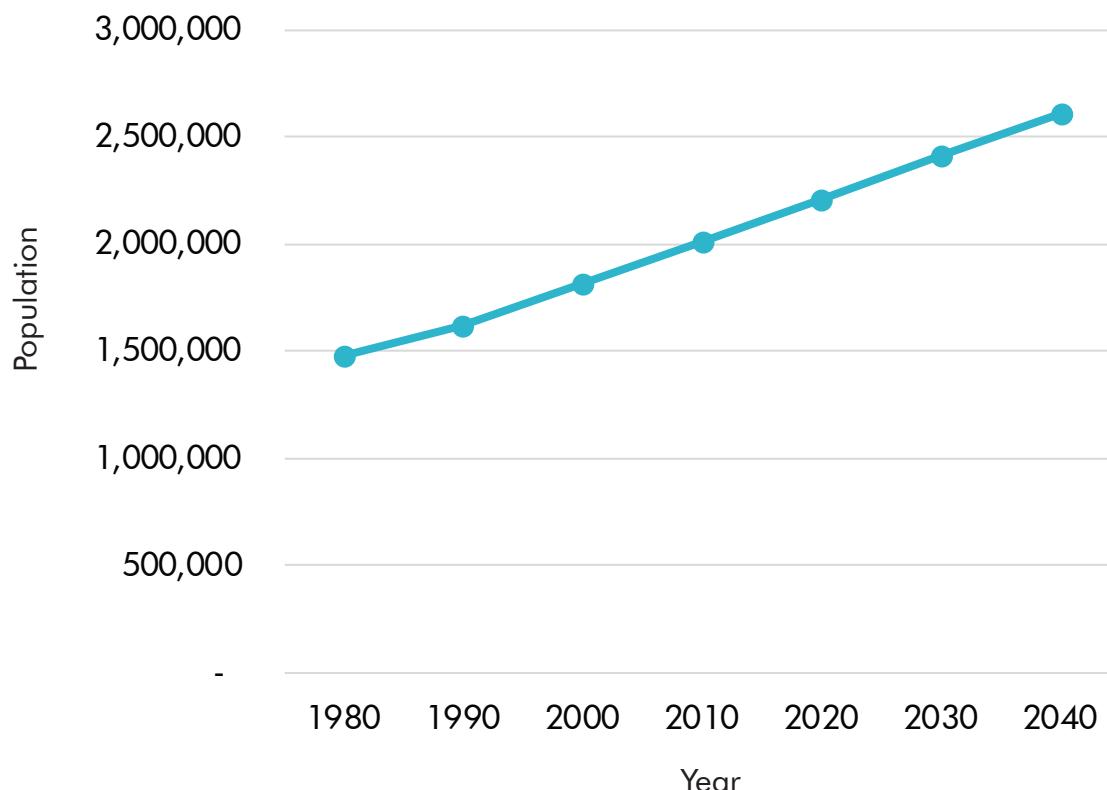
Topics for this section include:

- Population growth in Greater Kansas City.
- Population growth forecast.
- Foreign-born population growth or decline.
- Households with limited English proficiency.
- Distribution of the population by race and ethnicity.
- Distribution of the population by national origin.
- Population trends for children under age 5.
- Population of children by race.



POPULATION TRENDS

Greater Kansas City Population Trend and Forecast

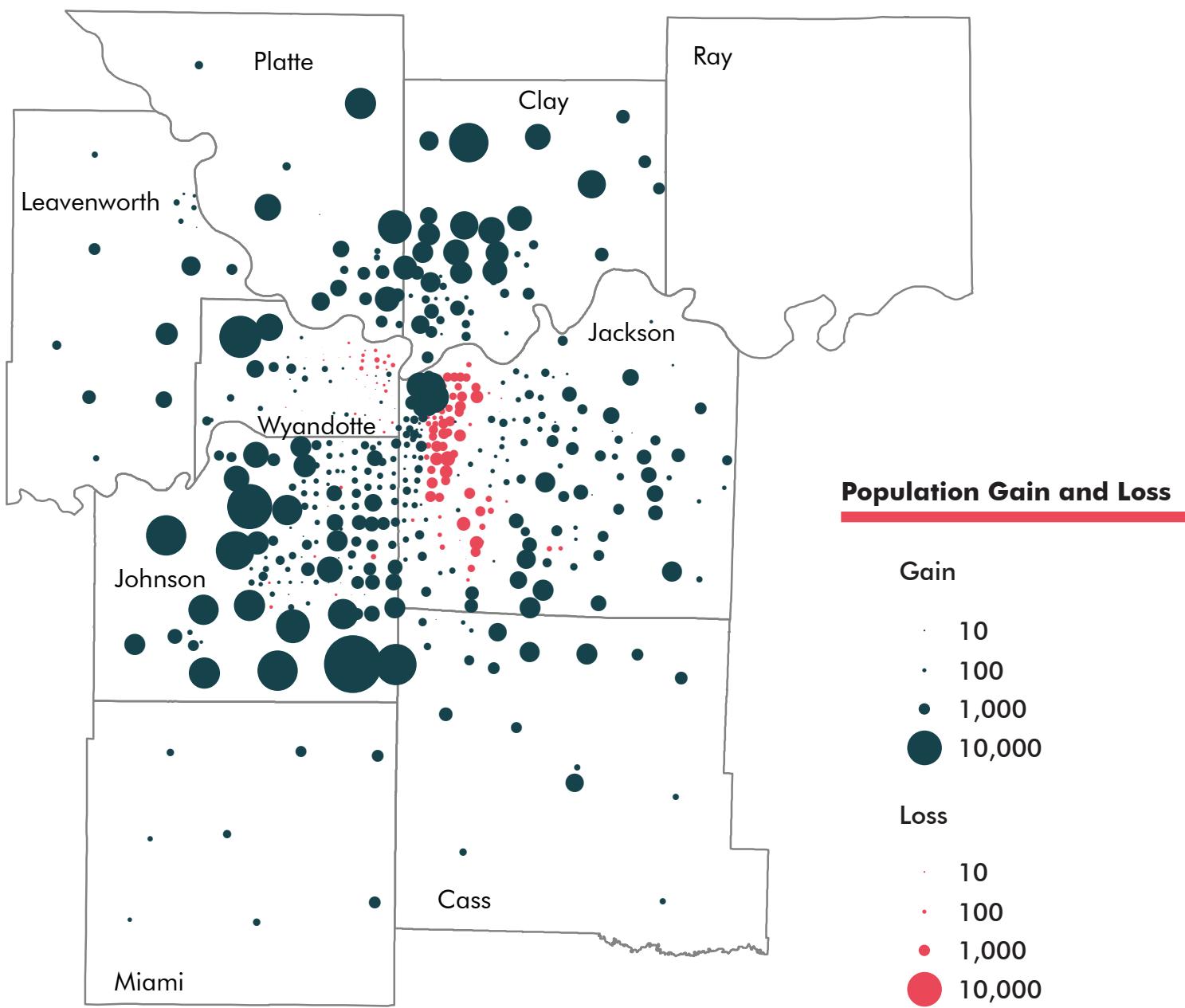


The Kansas City metropolitan statistical area (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau) grew steadily during the past few decades. In 1980, the 14-county metro was home to fewer than 1.5 million residents. The current population is more than 2.1 million. This solid growth is expected to continue with the metro reaching a population of 2.6 million by 2040.

Like most metropolitan areas, Kansas City's population growth is not evenly distributed. Most of the region's population growth is forecast to happen in the suburban fringe areas. However, Kansas City has also shown strong population gains in its downtown and in some first-ring suburbs, as these areas begin to redevelop.

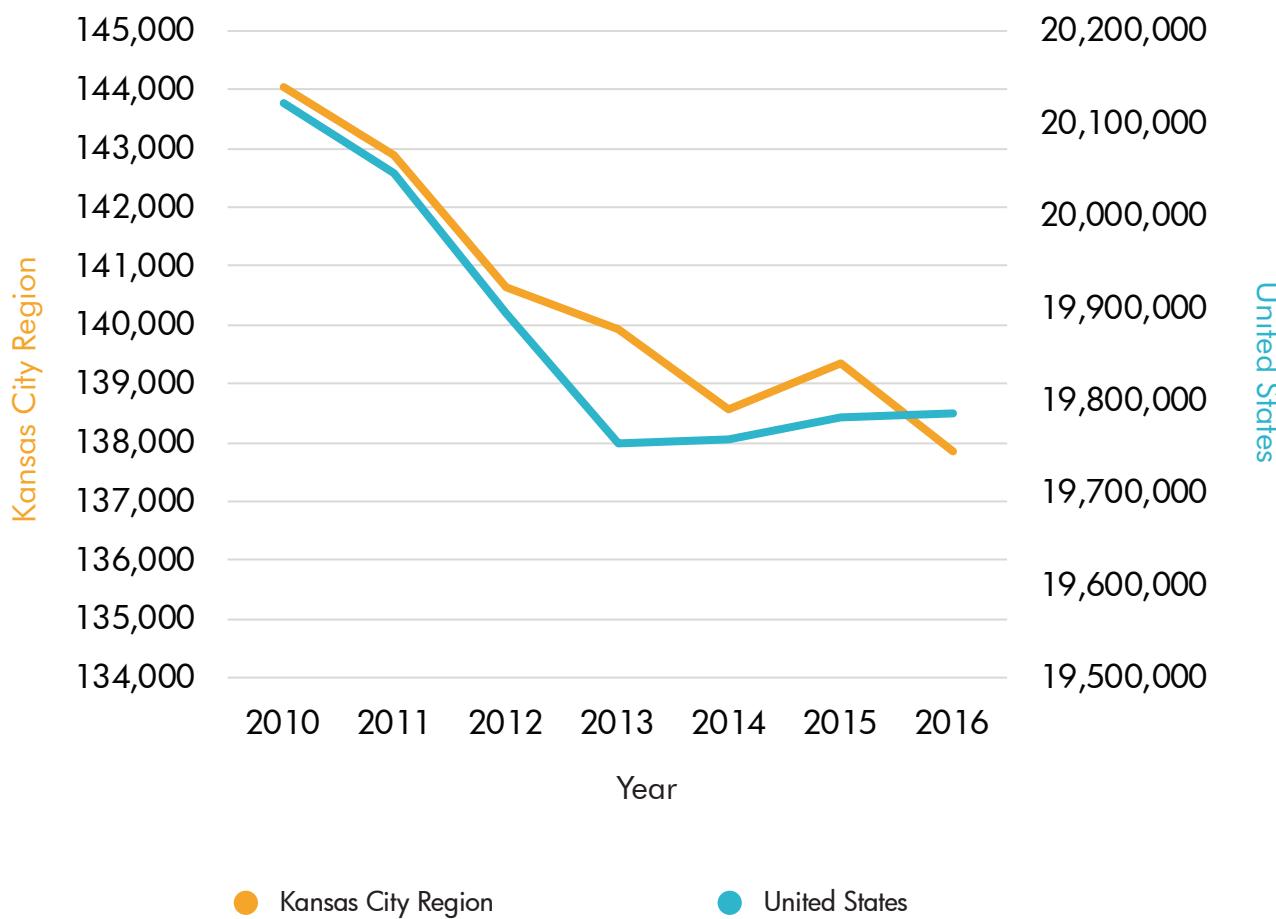


Population Change from 2010 to 2040



POPULATION TRENDS

Population Under 5 Trend

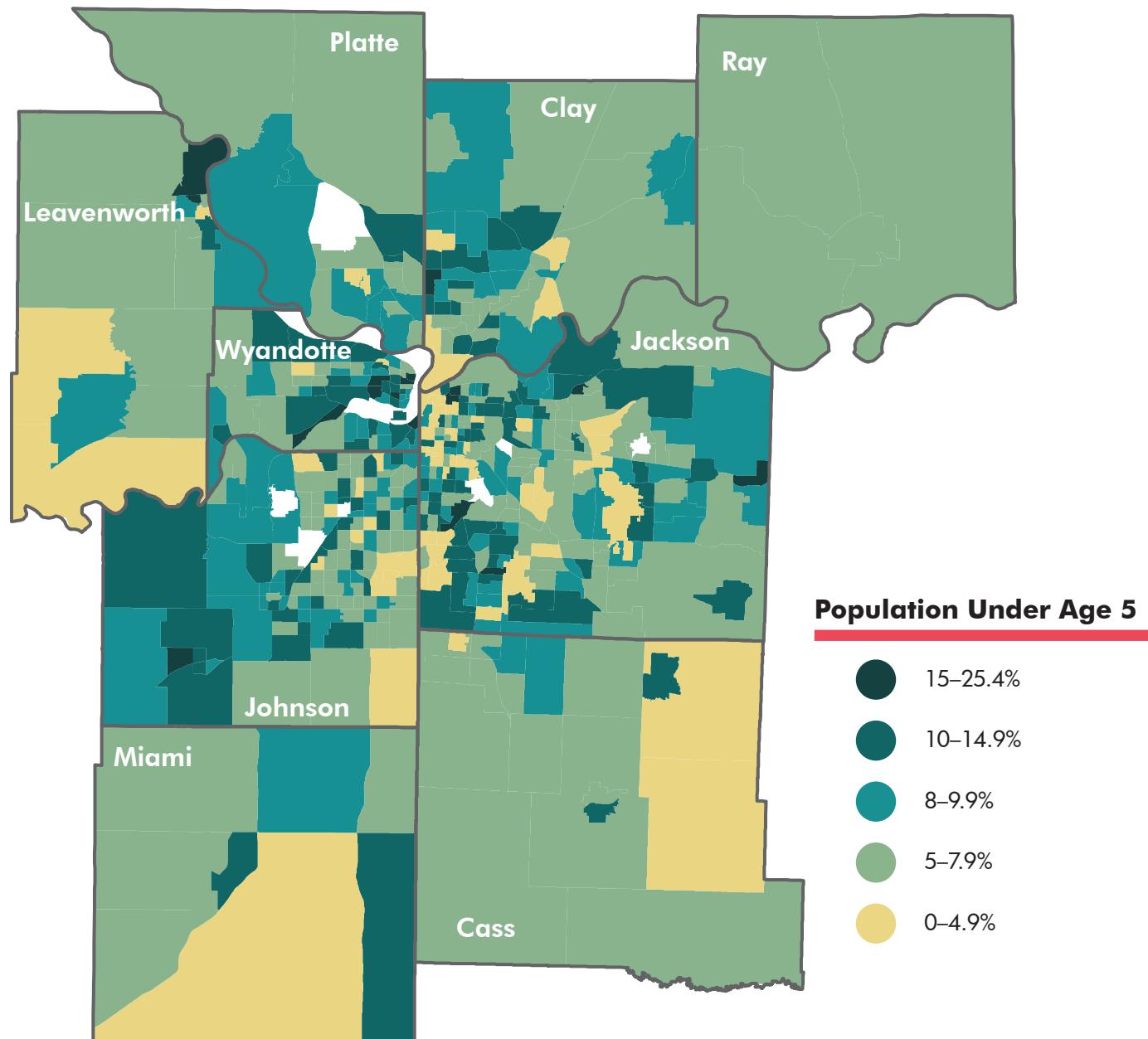


The first notable change school districts might see based on recent population trends is fewer students starting school. The population under age 5 has declined slightly in the Kansas City MSA since 2010. This decline corresponds with a national trend. The decline has been slight — approximately 4 percent — and it has not been seen uniformly across all districts.

This trend could have a significant impact in many districts, particularly those in more developed areas where opportunities to grow via new housing are limited.

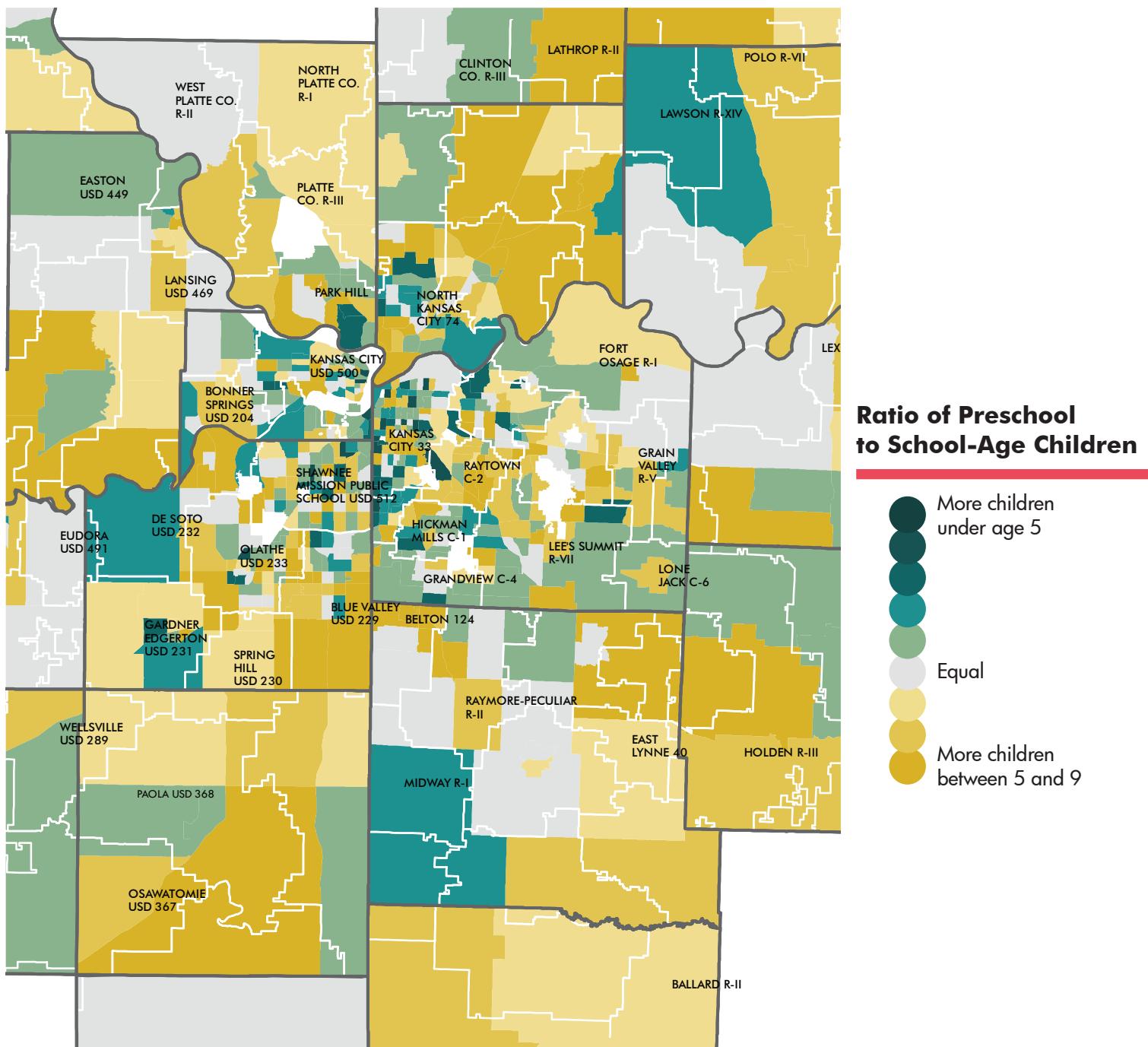
The map on the next page shows the share of the population that is under age 5 by census tract. It is difficult to spot a clear trend as high under-5 population tracts are evenly distributed throughout the region.

Percent of Population under Age 5



POPULATION TRENDS

Comparison of Age Cohorts in School District Boundaries



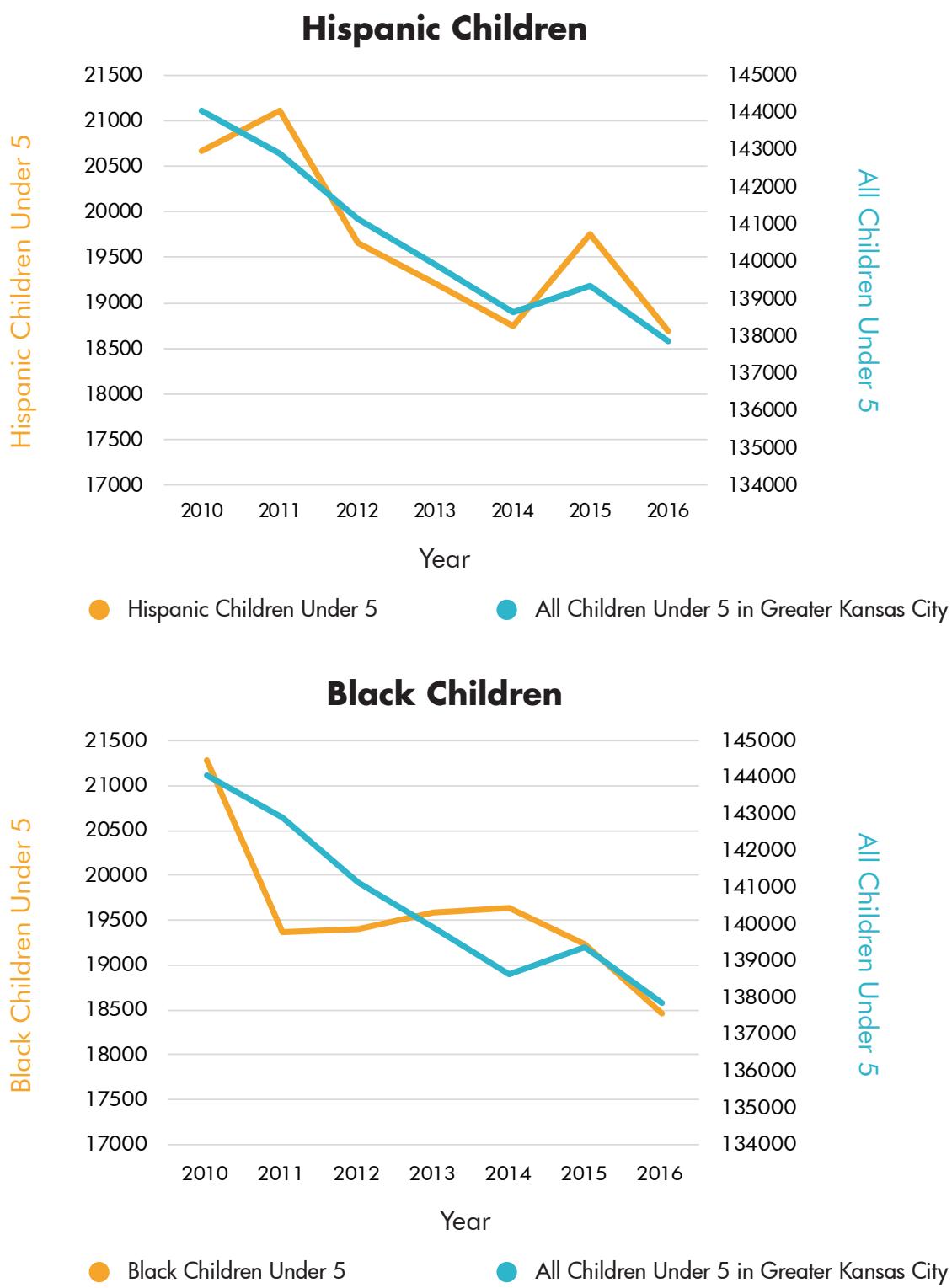
Comparison of Age Cohorts in School District Boundaries

As the population changes, school districts should not always assume continuous growth in enrollment. The map on page 10 shows anticipated changes in enrollment by looking at the ratio of children under age 5 compared to those ages 5 to 9. The green census tracts show where there are more preschool-age children than school-age children. School districts that overlap with these census tracts can anticipate growing enrollment in the coming years. The gold tracts have more school-age children than preschool-age children and might see declining enrollments in the near future. This analysis focuses on the current population only and does not factor in the likelihood of new housing or other demographic shifts that might change the number of children living in a community.

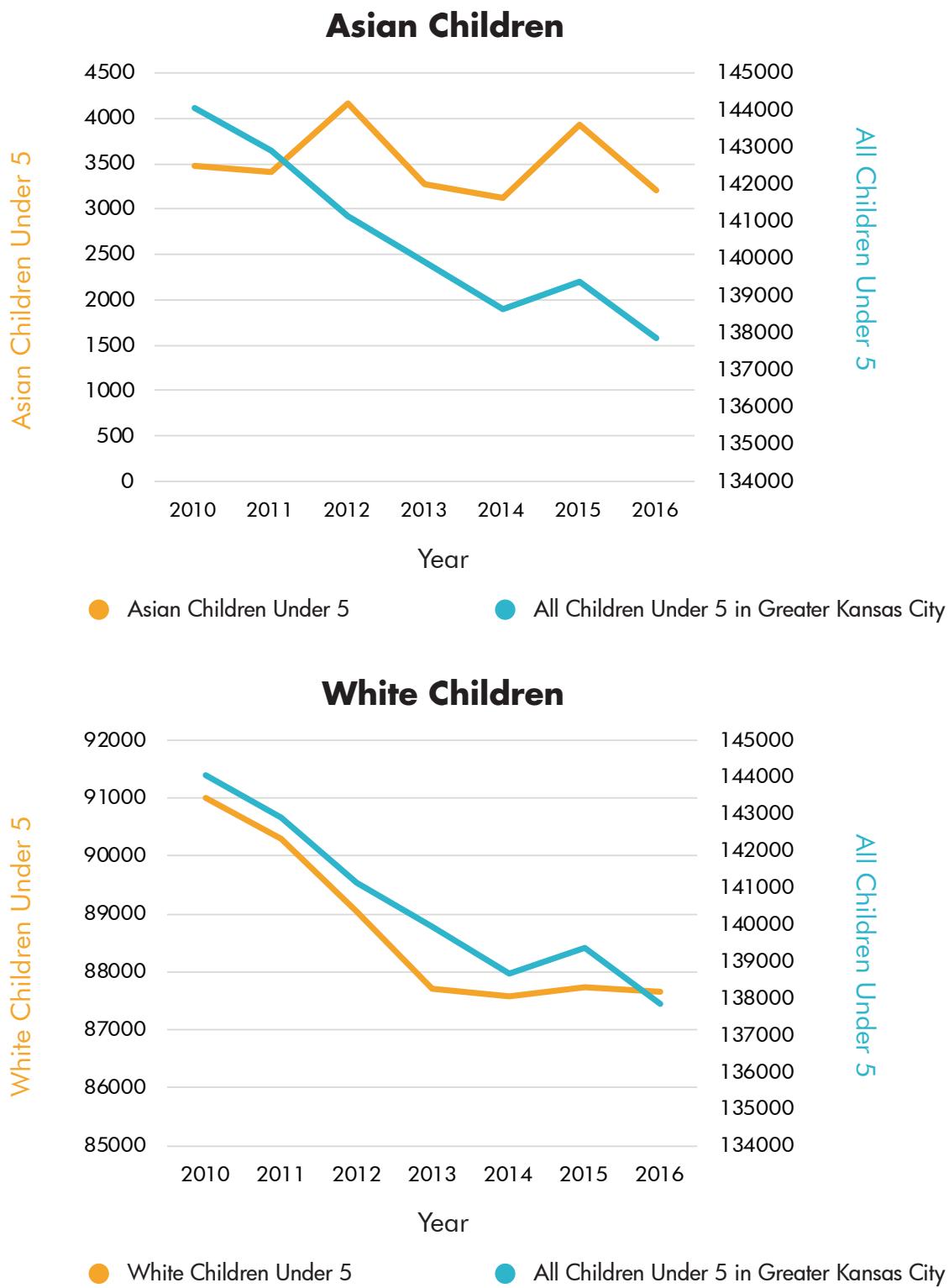


POPULATION TRENDS

Population Under 5 by Race and Ethnicity

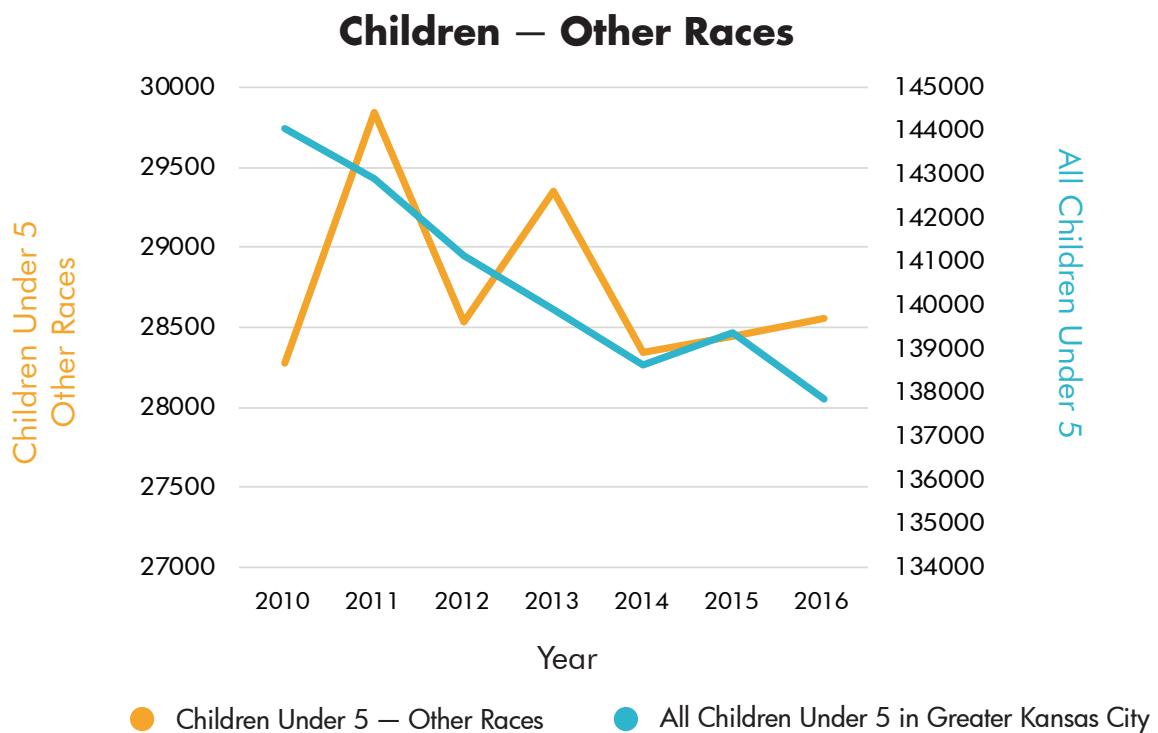


Population Under 5 by Race and Ethnicity



POPULATION TRENDS

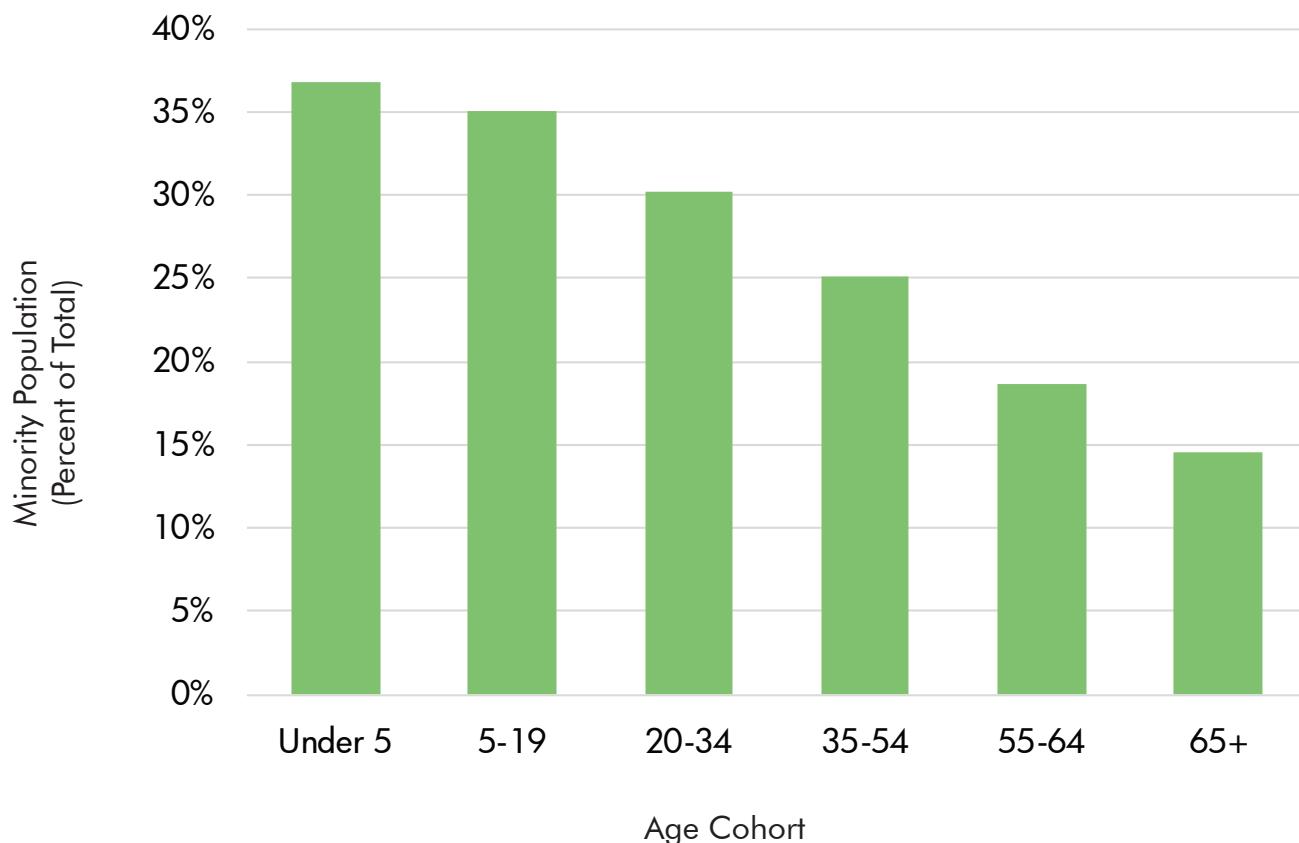
Population Under 5 by Race and Ethnicity



For almost all demographic groups, there is a downward trend in the population under age 5 in the Kansas City region. Only the young Asian population has remained steady, but this is a relatively small population in the region.



Percent Minority by Age Cohort



The children enrolling in our schools will be more diverse than the population overall. Approximately 37 percent of the population under age 5 are non-white, while 27 percent of the total population is non-white.



POPULATION TRENDS

Population Under 5 by School District

Kansas	Population Under 5	
	2011	2016
Basehor-Linwood Unified School District 458	642	630
Blue Valley Unified School District 229	6,626	6,939
Bonner Springs Unified School District 204	1,221	957
De Soto Unified School District 232	2,316	2,291
Easton Unified School District 449	127	215
Fort Leavenworth Unified School District 207	963	1,011
Gardner-Edgerton Unified School District 231	2,360	2,686
Kansas City Unified School District 500	9,969	9,995
Lansing Unified School District 469	912	687
Leavenworth Unified School District 453	1,662	1,875
Louisburg Unified School District 416	693	510
Olathe Unified School District 233	12,850	10,664
Osawatomie Unified School District 367	416	364
Paola Unified School District 368	594	666
Piper-Kansas City Unified School District 203	560	902
Shawnee Mission Public Schools Unified School District 512	13,249	14,516
Spring Hill Unified School District 230	914	972
Tonganoxie Unified School District 464	700	628
Turner-Kansas City Unified School District 202	1,569	1,647



MISSOURI

	Population Under 5	
	2011	2016
Belton 124 School District	1,969	1,482
Blue Springs R-IV School District	5,040	5,080
Center 58 School District	1,904	1,439
Drexel R-IV School District	155	89
Excelsior Springs 40 School District	1,174	1,178
Fort Osage R-I School District	1,996	2,114
Grain Valley R-V School District	1,380	1,472
Grandview C-4 School District	2,064	2,184
Hardin-Central C-2 School District	78	64
Harrisonville R-IX School District	801	890
Hickman Mills C-1 School District	4,000	4,590
Independence 30 School District	6,155	5,642
Kansas City 33 School District	13,478	13,063
Kearney R-I School District	990	955
Lawson R-XIV School District	384	346
Lee's Summit R-VII School District	6,191	6,212
Liberty 53 School District	4,045	3,498
Lone Jack C-6 School District	206	258
North Kansas City 74 School District	8,754	8,549
North Platte County R-I School District	126	299
Oak Grove R-VI School District	702	867
Orrick R-XI School District	101	99
Park Hill School District	4,020	4,189
Platte County R-III School District	1,619	1,885
Pleasant Hill R-III School District	691	810
Raymore-Peculiar R-II School District	1,992	2,131
Raytown C-2 School District	4,173	3,181
Richmond R-XVI School District	622	469
Smithville R-II School District	763	852
West Platte County R-II School District	299	227

POPULATION TRENDS

Language

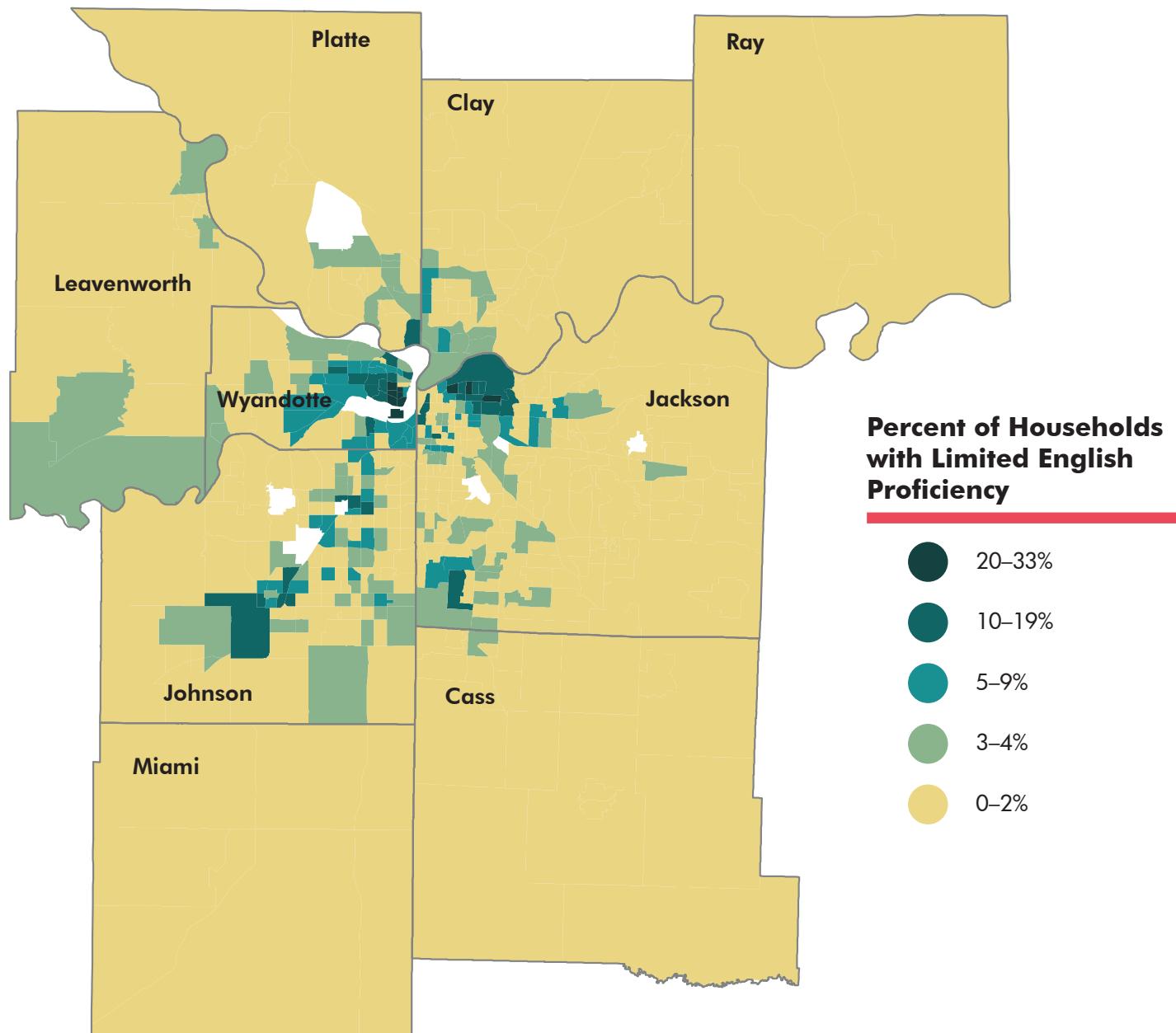
Language	Speakers who speak English less than very well
Spanish	47,351
Chinese	3,733
Vietnamese	2,971
Arabic	2,251
African Languages	2,239
Other Asian Languages	1,575
Laotian	1,535
French	1,340
Russian	1,243
Taglog	1,119
Korean	1,054
Other	6,207

Throughout the Kansas City MSA, 72,618 people, age 5 and older, do not speak English “very well” and rely on another language to communicate. Nearly two-thirds of this population speak Spanish, but many other languages are spoken in the metro.

The map on the next page shows pockets where individuals with limited English proficiency live. The central core areas — downtown Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas — have historically been home to more new immigrants. There are also pockets of limited English proficiency along the I-35 corridor in Johnson County and in the south Kansas City and Grandview areas.

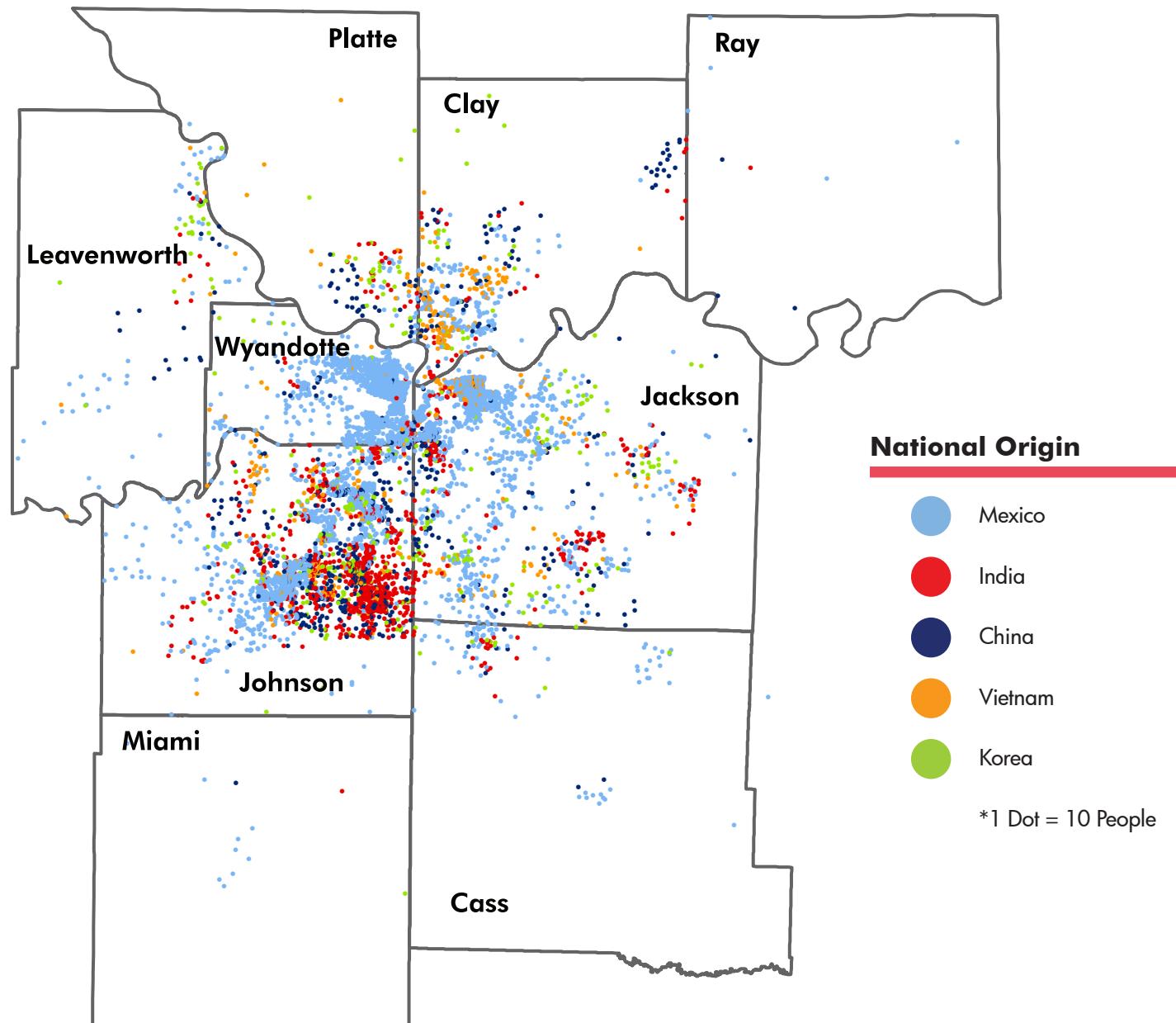
These numbers can be important to school districts that want to maintain an ongoing conversation with parents throughout their student’s education. In many instances, districts will need to know if language barriers might keep this conversation from happening.

Households with Limited English Proficiency



POPULATION TRENDS

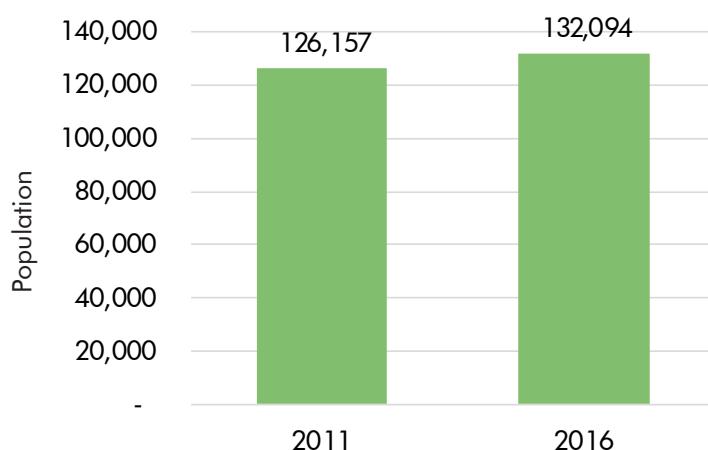
Foreign-Born Population



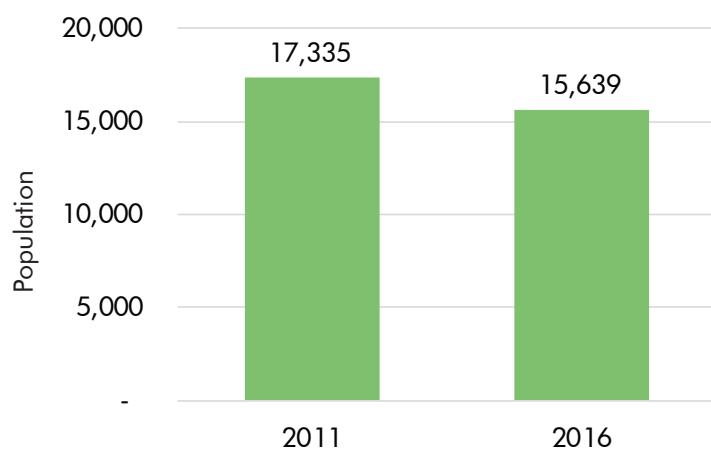
This map illustrates the location of foreign-born populations for the five largest countries of national origin.

Foreign-Born Population

Foreign-Born Population in Kansas City MSA



Children Under 6 with Foreign-Born Parents



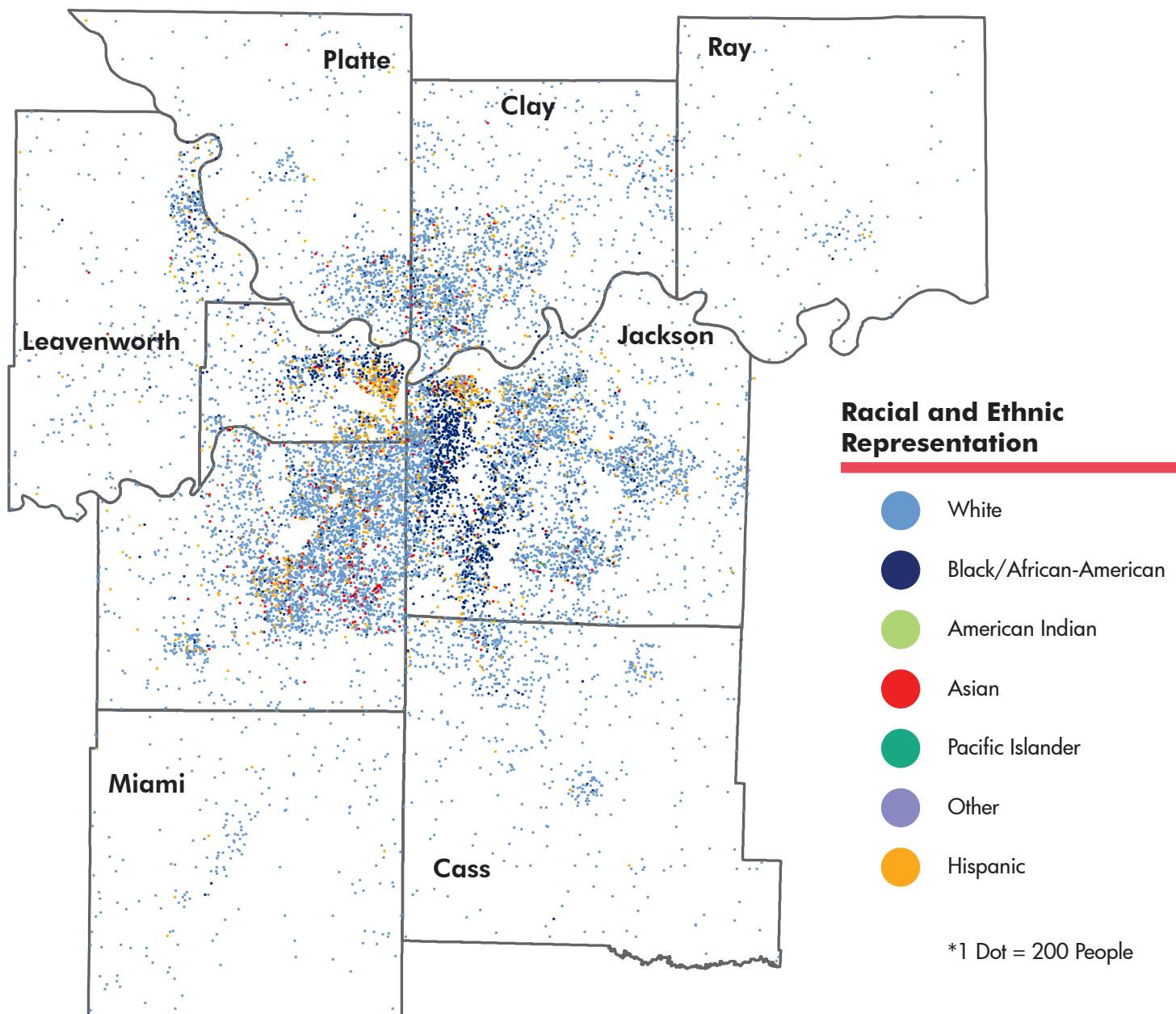
Racial and ethnic diversity is increasing in the Greater Kansas City region. Specifically, there was an increase in the foreign-born population between 2011 and 2016. In 2016, the number of foreign-born individuals in the region was 132,094. This is a 5 percent increase from 2011.

Surprisingly, the number of children under age 6 with foreign-born parents declined during the same period, falling from 17,335 to 15,639.



POPULATION TRENDS

Population by Race and Ethnicity



ECONOMICS

Children and families who live in poverty may need additional supports to maintain a viable standard of living. According to the federal register, families are living in poverty if their income is below the defined federal poverty level (FPL). In 2018, the federal government defines the FPL as \$16,460 for a family of two and \$25,100 for a family of four. Nationally, 19 percent of children under age 5 are living in poverty. In the Kansas City region, four of 19 school districts in Kansas have poverty levels at or greater than 19 percent. In Missouri, 12 of 30 school districts located in the Greater Kansas City region exceed 19 percent.

Topics in this section include:

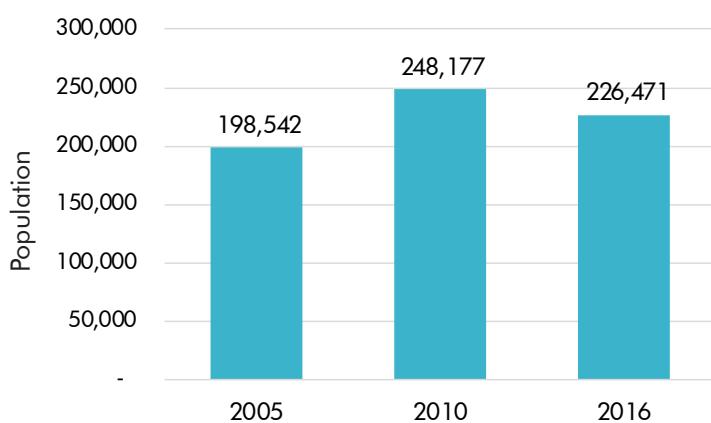
- Population in poverty.
- Children under age 5 in poverty.
- Free and reduced-price lunch.
- Single-parent households with children under 5.
- Housing patterns.
- Family, friend and neighbor index.



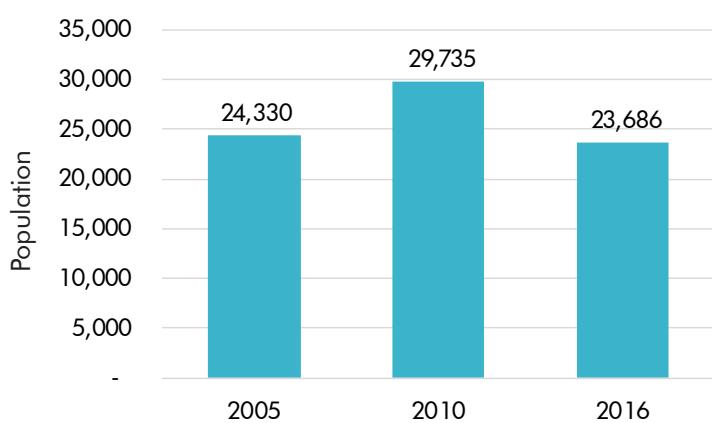
ECONOMICS

Population in Poverty

**Population in Poverty
Kansas City MSA**



**Population Under 5 in Poverty
Kansas City MSA**

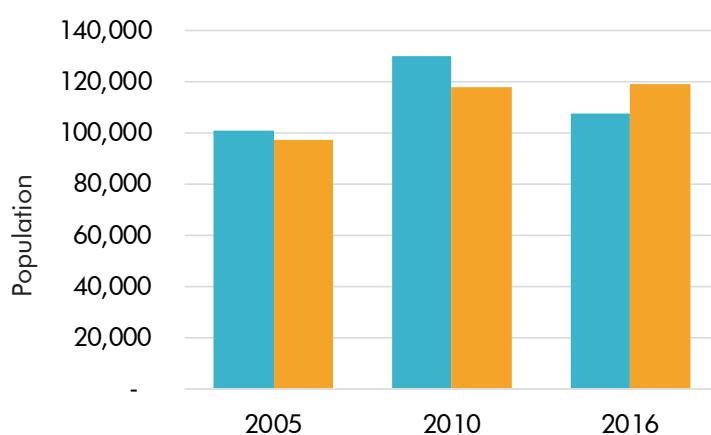


Poverty — for the entire population and the population under age 5 — has been trending downward since 2010. This reverses the upward trend between 2005 and 2010. This increase in individuals living in poverty between 2005 and 2010 was due largely to the Great Recession. As economic conditions have improved, the number of people in poverty has declined.

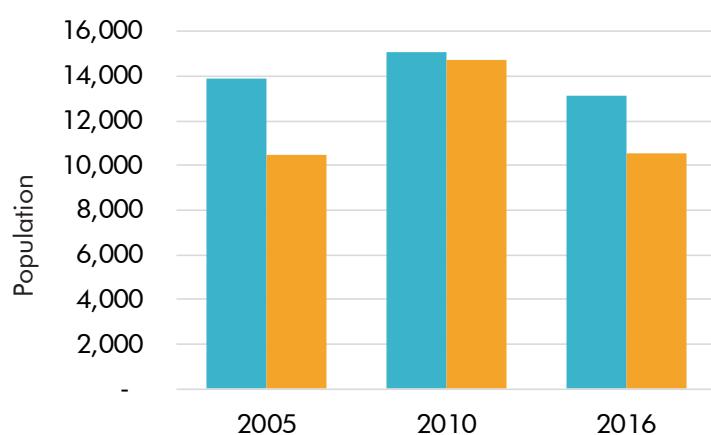


Population in Poverty

**Population in Poverty
Kansas City MSA**



**Population Under 5 in Poverty
Kansas City MSA**



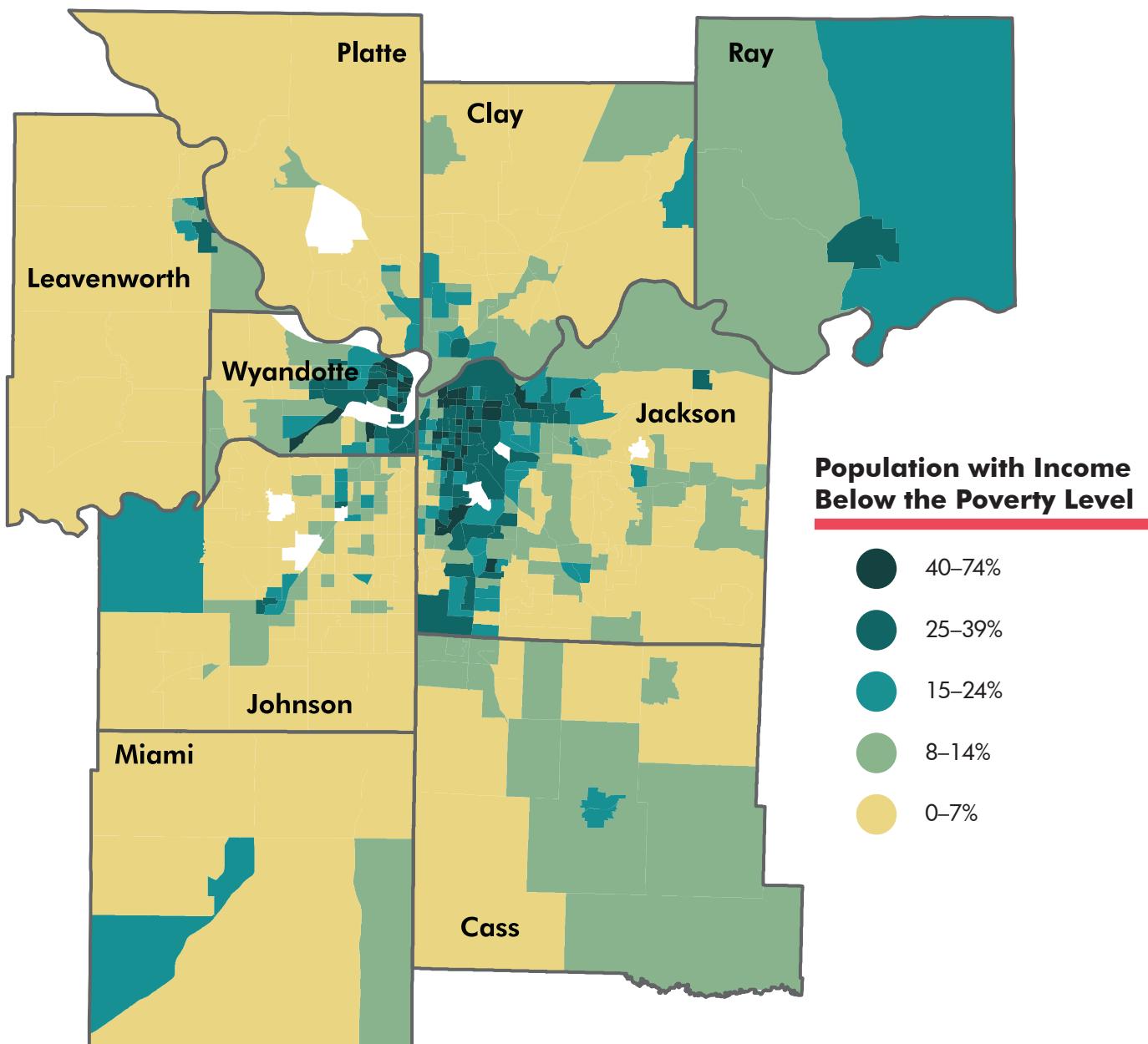
● Kansas City, Kansas, and
Kansas City, Missouri

● Suburbs

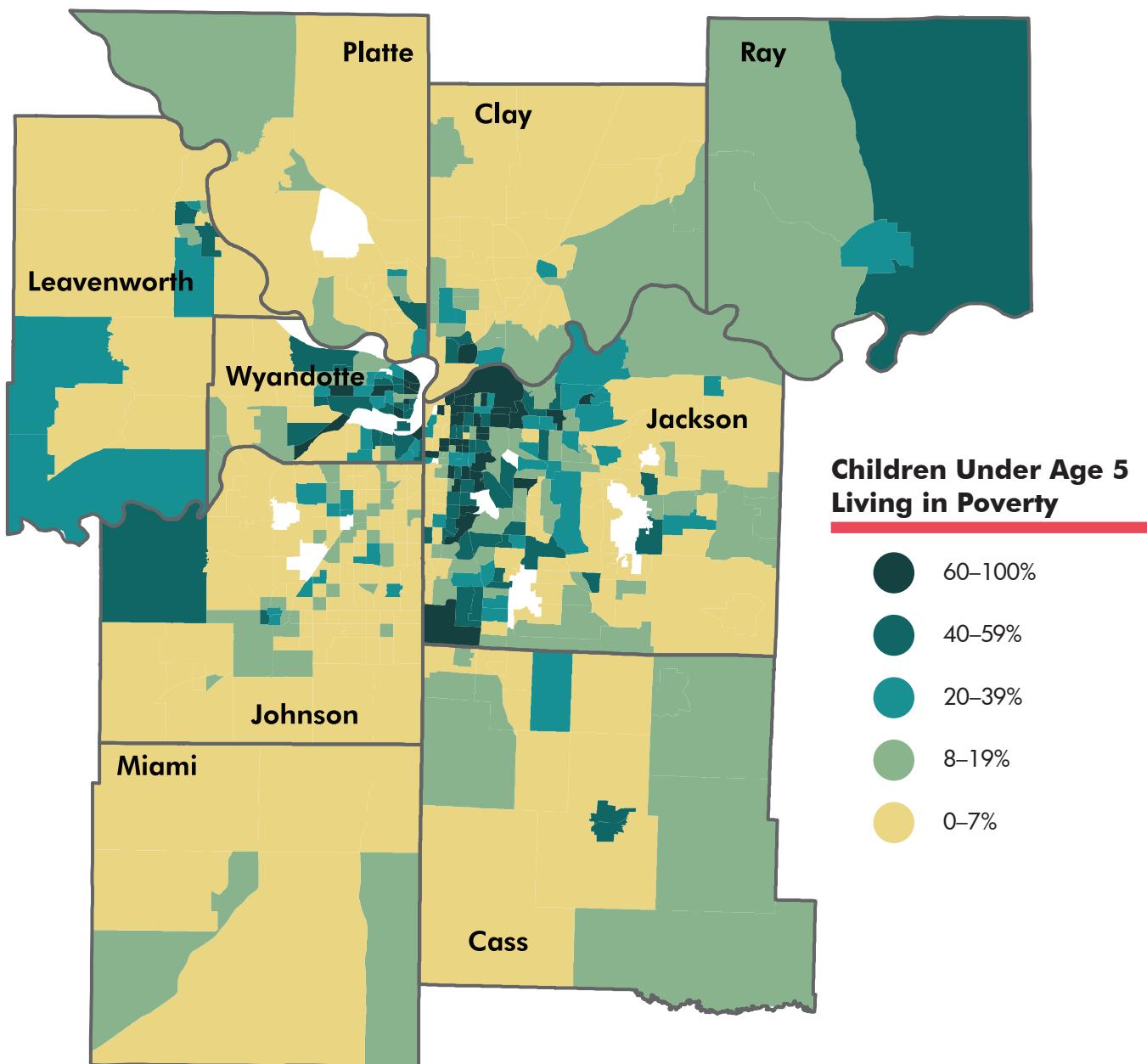
While overall poverty is declining, there are shifts in who experiences poverty and where poverty is concentrated. The population in poverty is concentrated in the urban cores of Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas. Between 2010 and 2016, the population in poverty for these two cities decreased. Conversely, there was a slight increase in the number of individuals living in poverty in the suburbs. These trends are not reflected in the population under age 5. The number of children under age 5 in poverty living in the urban core decreased slightly between 2010 and 2016, while children in the suburbs were less likely to experience poverty in 2016.

ECONOMICS

Population in Poverty



Population in Poverty



ECONOMICS

Poverty Rate for Children Under 5 by School District

School Districts in Kansas	Poverty Rate for Population Under Age 5
Basehor-Linwood Unified School District 458	5.9%
Blue Valley Unified School District 229	2.6%
Bonner Springs Unified School District 204	14.3%
De Soto Unified School District 232	14.2%
Easton Unified School District 449	0.0%
Fort Leavenworth Unified School District 207	4.6%
Gardner-Edgerton Unified School District 231	2.9%
Kansas City Unified School District 500	42.3%
Lansing Unified School District 469	19.4%
Leavenworth Unified School District 453	30.9%
Louisburg Unified School District 416	14.1%
Olathe Unified School District 233	14.1%
Osawatomie Unified School District 367	12.1%
Paola Unified School District 368	11.1%
Piper-Kansas City Unified School District 203	5.7%
Shawnee Mission Public Schools Unified School District 512	10.5%
Spring Hill Unified School District 230	2.9%
Tonganoxie Unified School District 464	5.3%
Turner-Kansas City Unified School District 202	25.9%



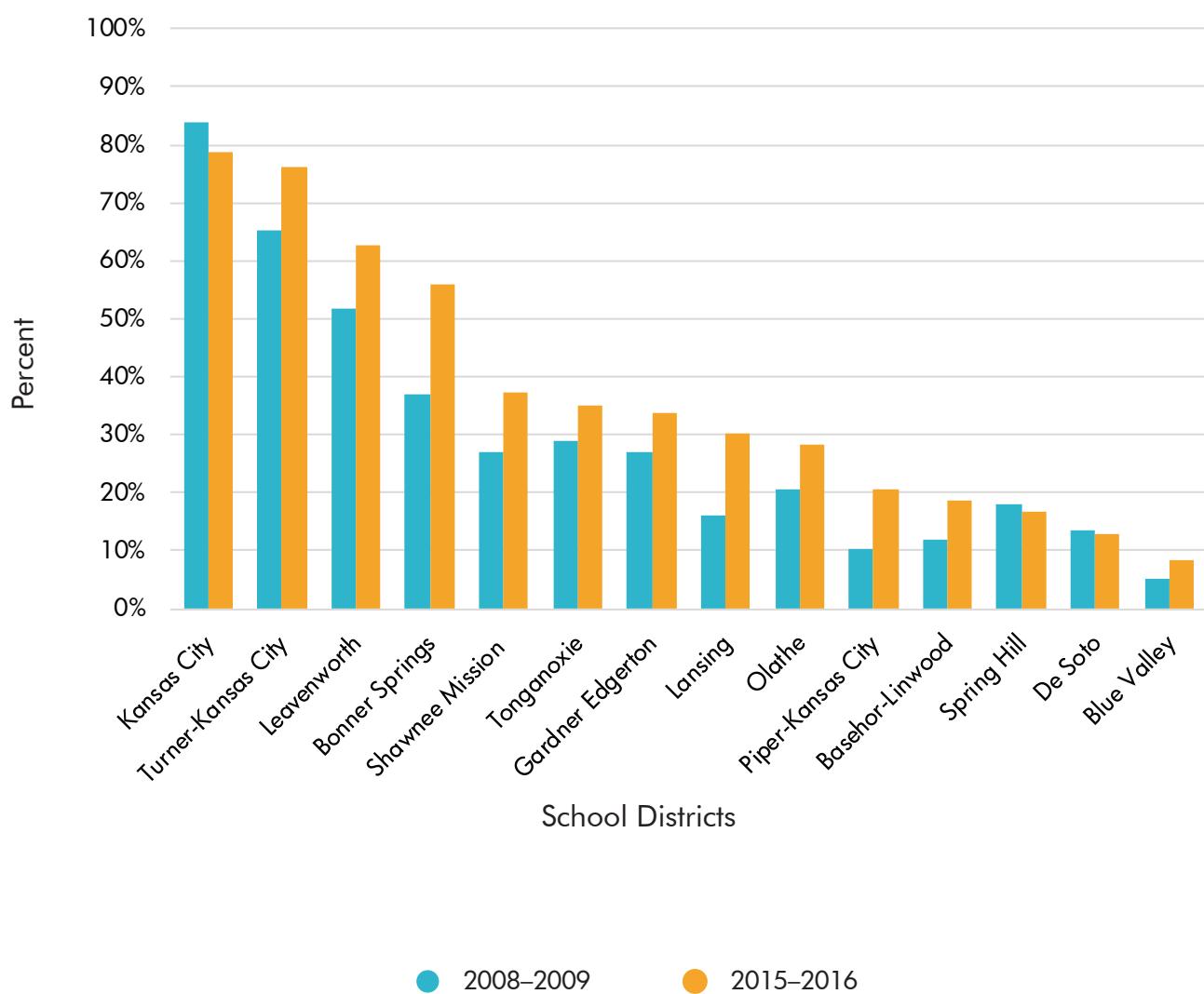
Poverty Rate for Children Under 5 by School District

School Districts in Missouri	Poverty Rate for Population Under Age 5
Belton 124 School District	10.5%
Blue Springs R-IV School District	17.8%
Center 58 School District	28.6%
Drexel R-IV School District	6.7%
Excelsior Springs 40 School District	10.9%
Fort Osage R-I School District	37.8%
Grain Valley R-V School District	5.8%
Grandview C-4 School District	33.8%
Hardin-Central C-2 School District	20.3%
Harrisonville R-IX School District	36.5%
Hickman Mills C-1 School District	31.9%
Independence 30 School District	31.6%
Kansas City 33 School District	46.3%
Kearney R-I School District	2.1%
Lawson R-XIV School District	8.1%
Lee's Summit R-VII School District	9.1%
Liberty 53 School District	6.0%
Lone Jack C-6 School District	6.2%
North Kansas City 74 School District	19.7%
North Platte County R-I School District	1.7%
Oak Grove R-VI School District	12.5%
Orrick R-XI School District	23.2%
Park Hill School District	11.9%
Platte County R-III School District	13.9%
Pleasant Hill R-III School District	14.6%
Raymore-Peculiar R-II School District	8.9%
Raytown C-2 School District	29.2%
Richmond R-XVI School District	46.1%
Smithville R-II School District	7.7%
West Platte County R-II School District	7.9%

ECONOMICS

Population in Poverty

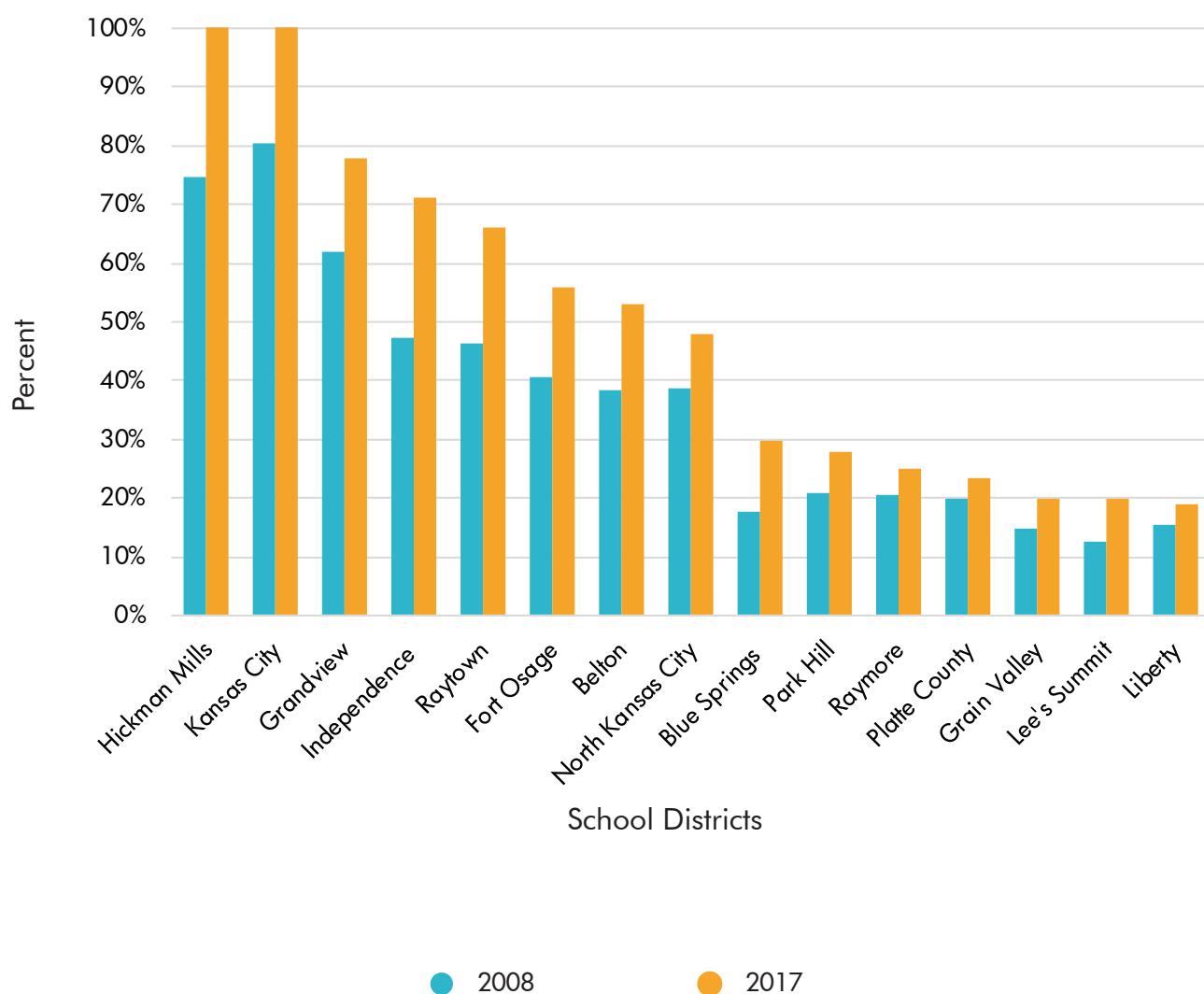
**Percent of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch
(Largest School Districts on Kansas Side of the Kansas City Region)**



For school districts located on the Kansas side of the Kansas City region, the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch increased. More than half of all students are eligible in the Turner, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs and Kansas City, Kansas, school districts.

Population in Poverty

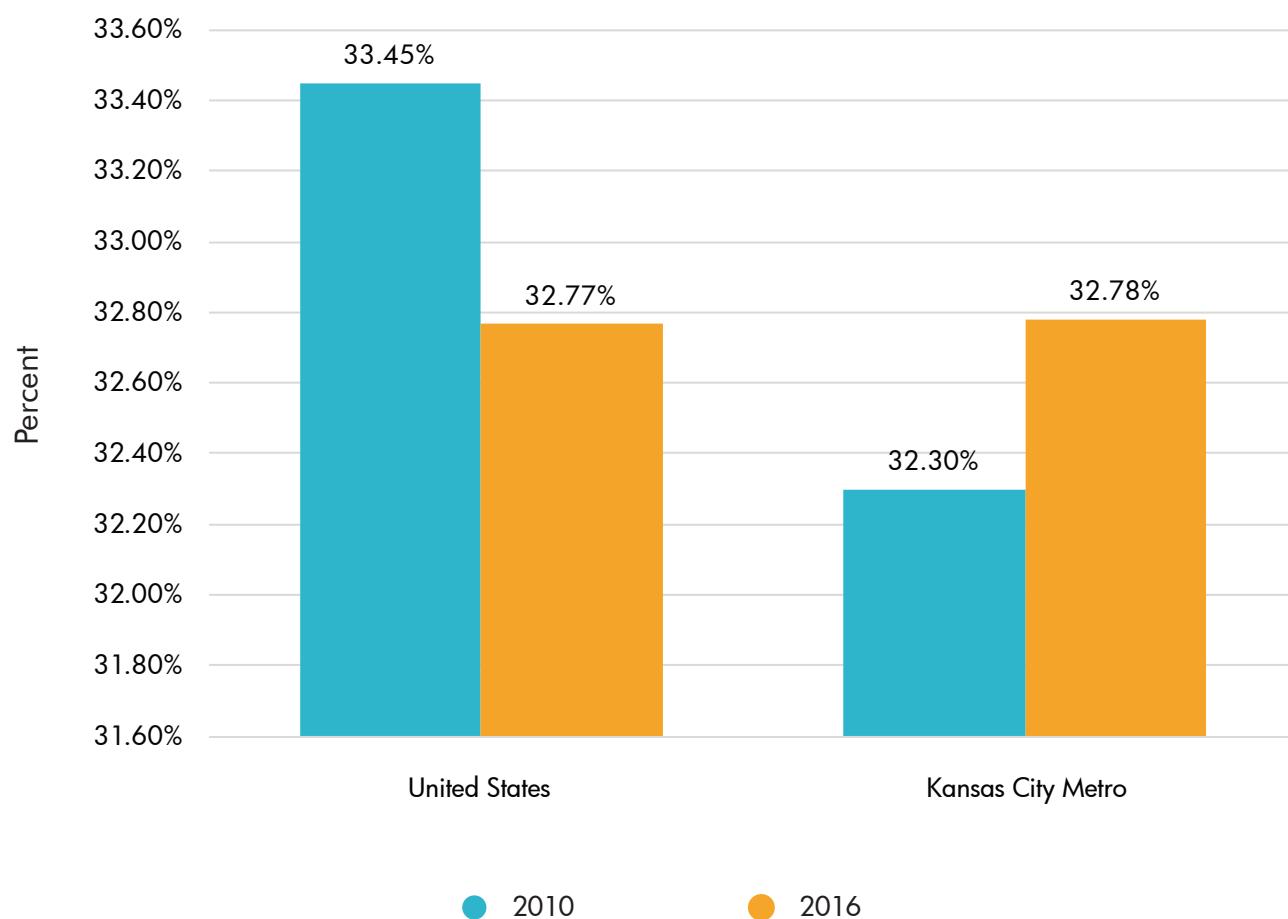
**Percent of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch
(Largest School Districts on Missouri Side of the Kansas City Region)**



For school districts located on the Missouri side in the Kansas City region, the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch increased in all large districts. More than half of all students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch in seven large school districts (Hickman Mills, Kansas City, Grandview, Independence, Raytown, Fort Osage and Belton).

Single-parent Households

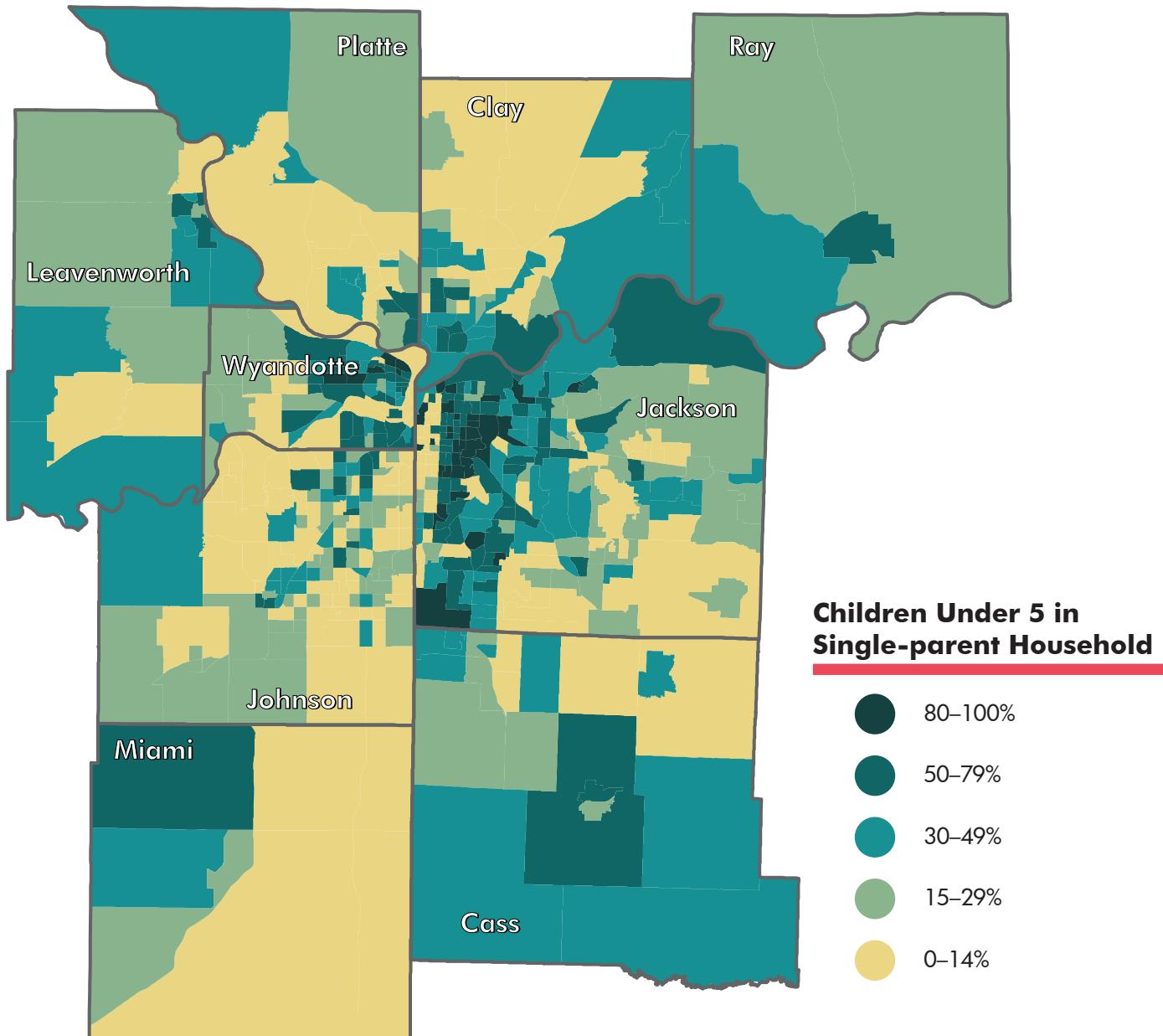
Share of Households with Children Under 5 that are Single-parent Households



In 2016, 36,677 (32.8 percent) of households with children in the Greater Kansas City region are single parent households. This was a slight increase from 2010 when 32.3 percent of households with children were single parent households. The rate for the Kansas City region and the United States were equivalent in 2016.

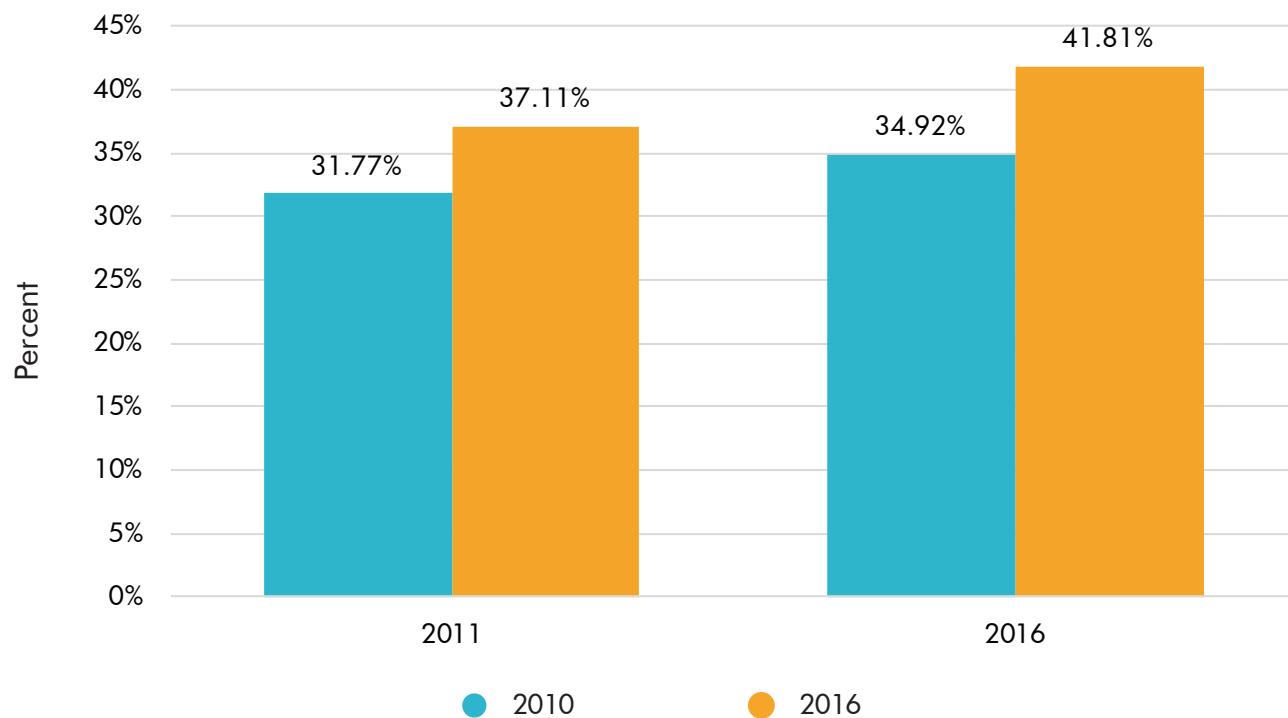
Single parent households with children under age 5 can be found all across the metro, but the percent of households with single parents is higher in urban core communities, such as Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri.

Single-parent Households



Home Ownership Trends

Percent of Occupied Housing Units Rented



Renting has become a more common housing practice throughout the Kansas City region. In 2011, 31.8 percent of occupied housing units were rented. By 2016, that percent went up to 34.9 percent. In both time periods, households with young children were more likely to rent. The most recent data indicates that nearly 42 percent of all families with young children rent.

The movement towards rentals reflect two trends. First, people are choosing to rent. Popular locations like downtown Kansas City provide mostly rental housing. Second, renters may have no choice because mortgage requirements became more stringent after the 2008 housing crisis.

Regardless of the motivation for renting rather than owning a home, an increase in renting for households with children means that children are more likely to move from one school district to another. This lack of continuity can negatively impact educational outcomes.

Family, Friends and Neighbor (FFN) Care

Family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care is broadly defined as care that is, “... provided by caregivers who are relatives, friends, neighbors, or babysitters/nannies, who are unlicensed or subject to minimal — if any — regulation.” FFN is the most common form of non-parental care in the United States. A 2011 national study estimates that half of all children under the age of 6 spend some time in FFN care. Due to the care not being monitored, regulated, or licensed, both the location and quality of the care are unknown.

The early years of development are important for a child’s success. This reality means supporting FFN providers is an important strategy to consider. In order to highlight areas of the region where FFN services are likely to be used, MARC created an FFN Index. The FFN Index illustrates where, in the Kansas City region, parents may need to rely heavily on friends, family and neighbors to fill gaps in child care.

The index is compiled with a combination of the following information:

- Poverty rate.
- Minority population.
- Foreign-born population.
- Children ages 3 and 4, not enrolled in early learning.
- Children under 6 with all parents in labor force.



Resources for the FFN Index

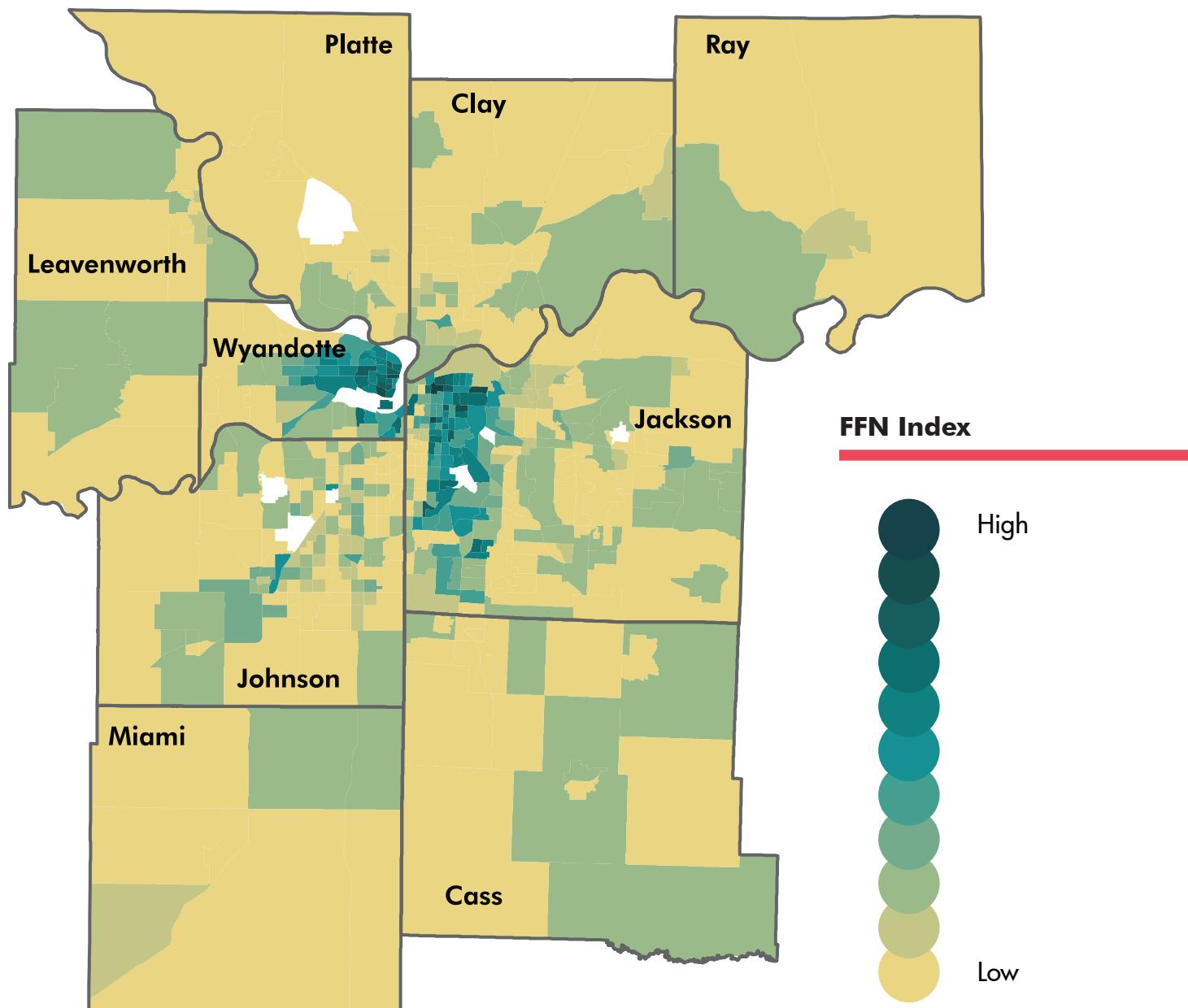
Susman-Stillman, A. & Banghart, P. (2008). *Demographics of family, friend, and neighbor child care in the United States*. National Center for Children in Poverty.

Susman-Stillman, A. & Banghart, P. (2011). *Child care and early education research connections: Quality in family, friend, and neighbor child care settings*. National Center for Children in Poverty.

Modeled after the calculation completed in Denver Children’s Affairs Status of Denver’s Children: A Community Resource 2017.

ECONOMICS

Family, Friends and Neighbor (FFN) Care



The FFN Index shows where parents and guardians may need to rely on friends, family and neighbors to fill gaps in child care. A high FFN Index highlights U.S. Census tracts where parents and guardians rely on FFN care. A low FFN Index shows that parents and guardians are not relying on these support systems.

HEALTH

For children to enter school ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond, parents and guardians must first address health and nutritional needs. A key contributor to healthy development is regular physical exams in the form of well-child visits. These exams encourage healthy habits, prevent illnesses, identify health concerns early and provide treatment. Children without health insurance are less likely to access preventive care that can identify health issues before they become serious. A healthy diet is also an important factor for a child's development. Unfortunately, not all families reside in areas where nutritious food is readily available, and instead live in areas considered food deserts.

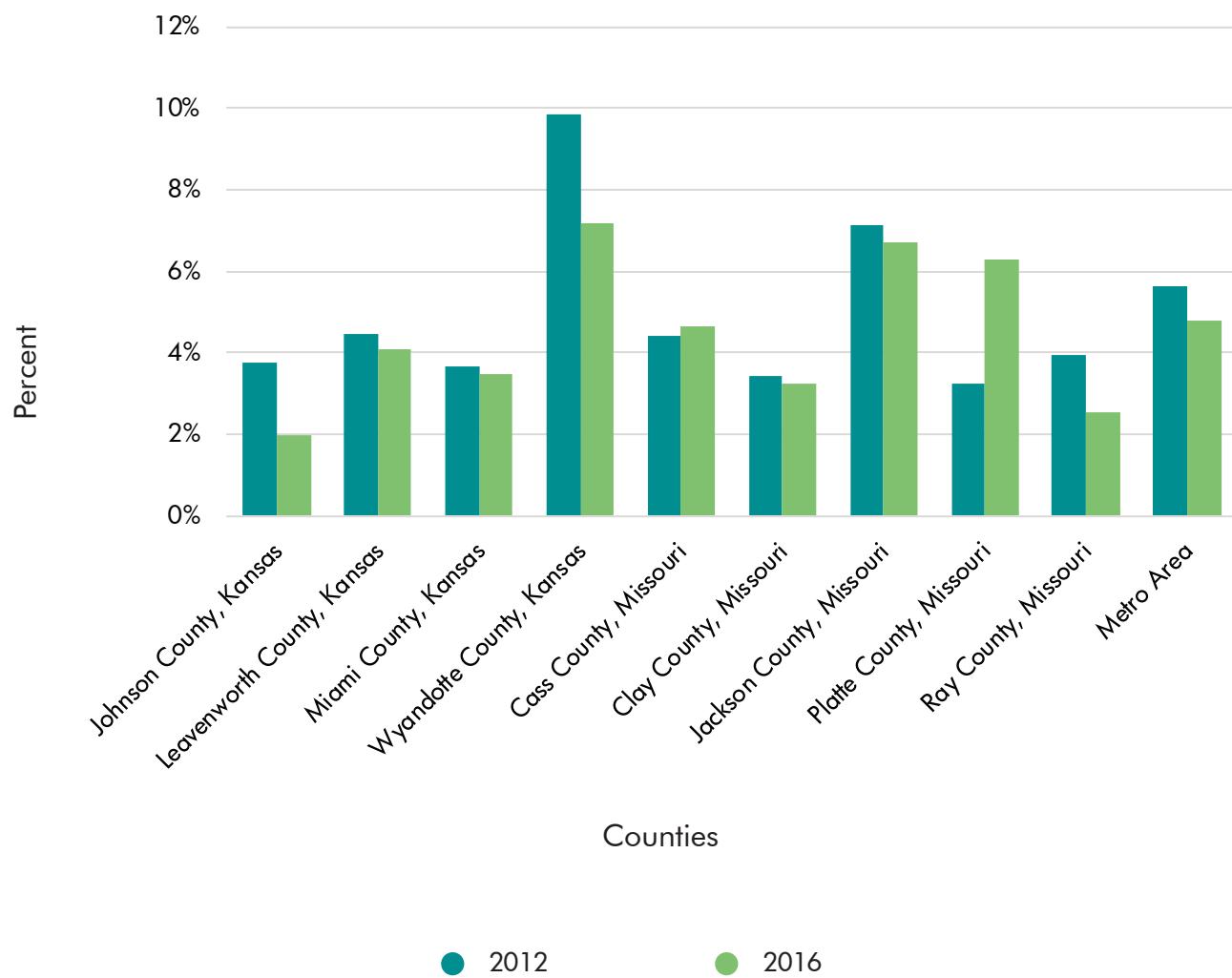
Topics in this section include:

- Insurance coverage for children under 5.
- Birth weight.
- Educational levels for mothers.
- Food deserts.
- Food assistance.



Percent Uninsured

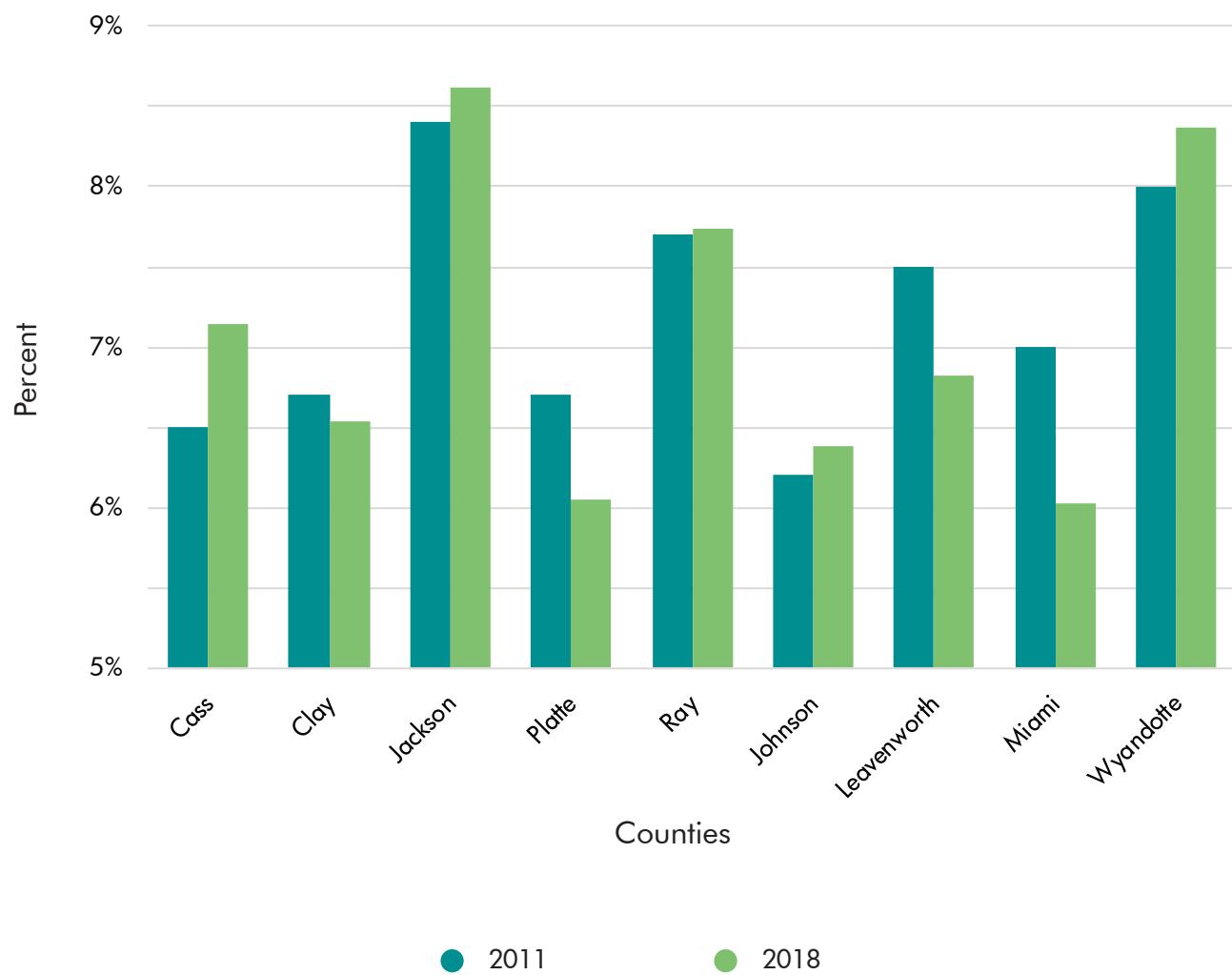
Percent Uninsured (Population 5 and Younger)



Since 2012, the percent of uninsured children in the Kansas City region has trended downward. Across the metro, 4.8 percent of children under age 5 lack health insurance. This is down from 5.6 percent in 2012.

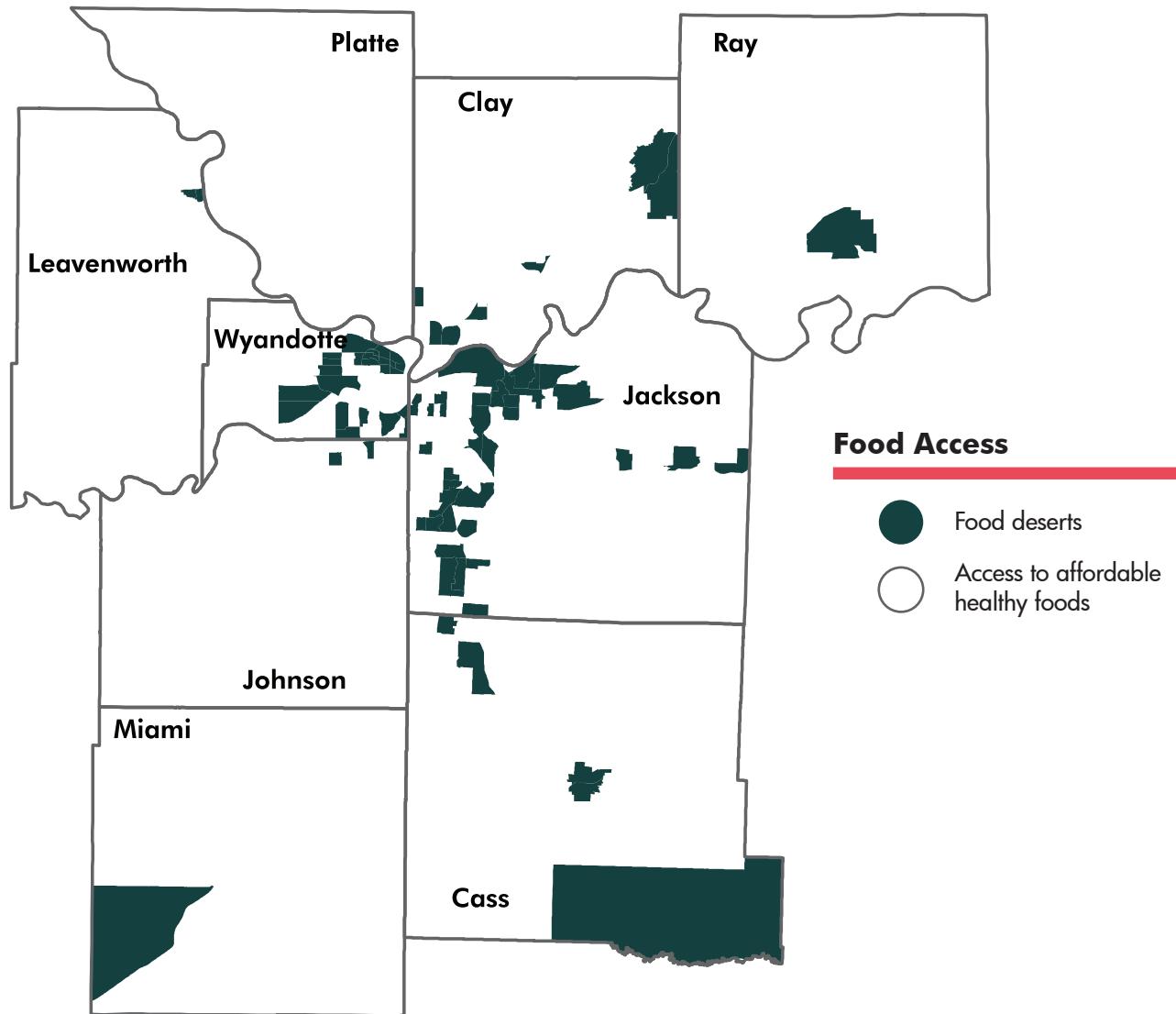
Birth Weight

Babies Born at Low Birth Weight



The percent of babies born at a low birth weight increased in five area counties and declined in four. Jackson County and Wyandotte County have the highest rates of babies born at a low birth weight. In both counties, more than 8 percent of babies are born at a low birth weight.

Food Deserts



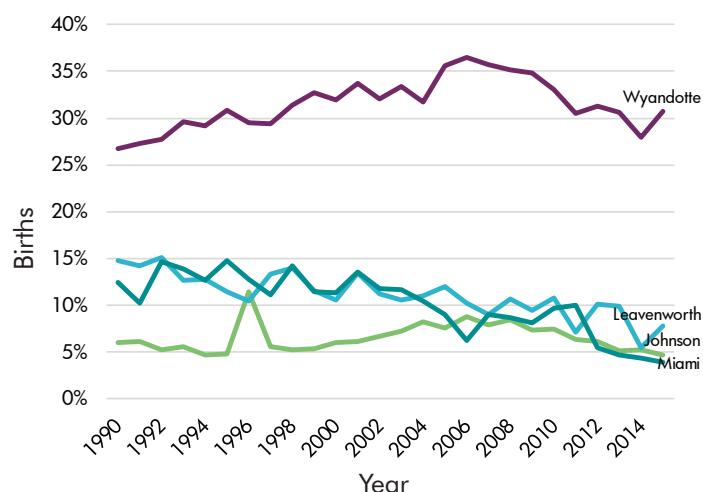
Food deserts are areas where residents do not have easy access to affordable, healthy foods. This means residents' diets will lack essential nutrients.

Food deserts can be a real problem in rural areas where grocery stores may be located many miles away from some residents. Urban core areas are also susceptible to food deserts as grocers often choose not to locate in low-income areas.

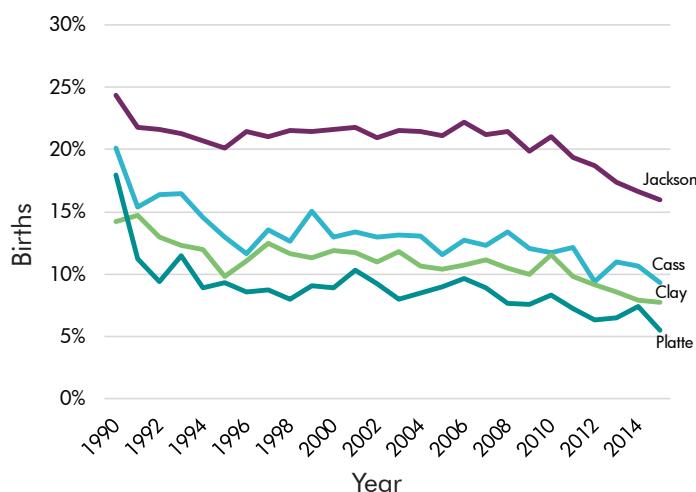
Across the region, food deserts tend to follow this pattern. The location of food deserts in Greater Kansas City matches the high poverty maps.

Educational Outcomes for Mothers

Live births to mothers with less than a high school education (Kansas)



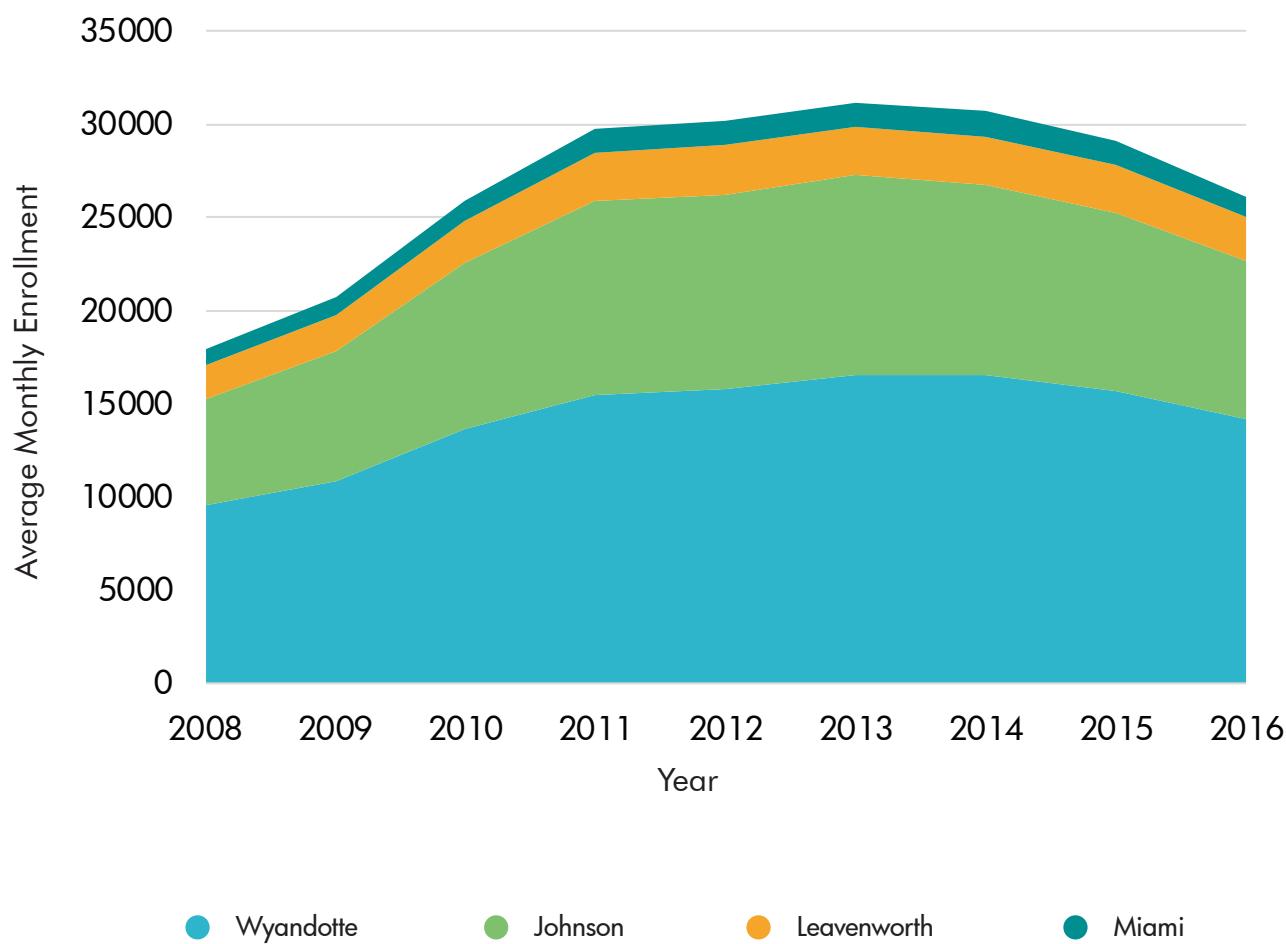
Live births to mothers with less than a high school education (Missouri)



In recent years, the share of mothers with less than a high school education has been trending downward for all counties in the Greater Kansas City region. Wyandotte County, Kansas, has the highest share — more than 30 percent — of mothers earning less than a high school education. Jackson County has the highest rate — 16 percent — of mothers earning less than a high school education for metro counties on the Missouri side.

Food Assistance

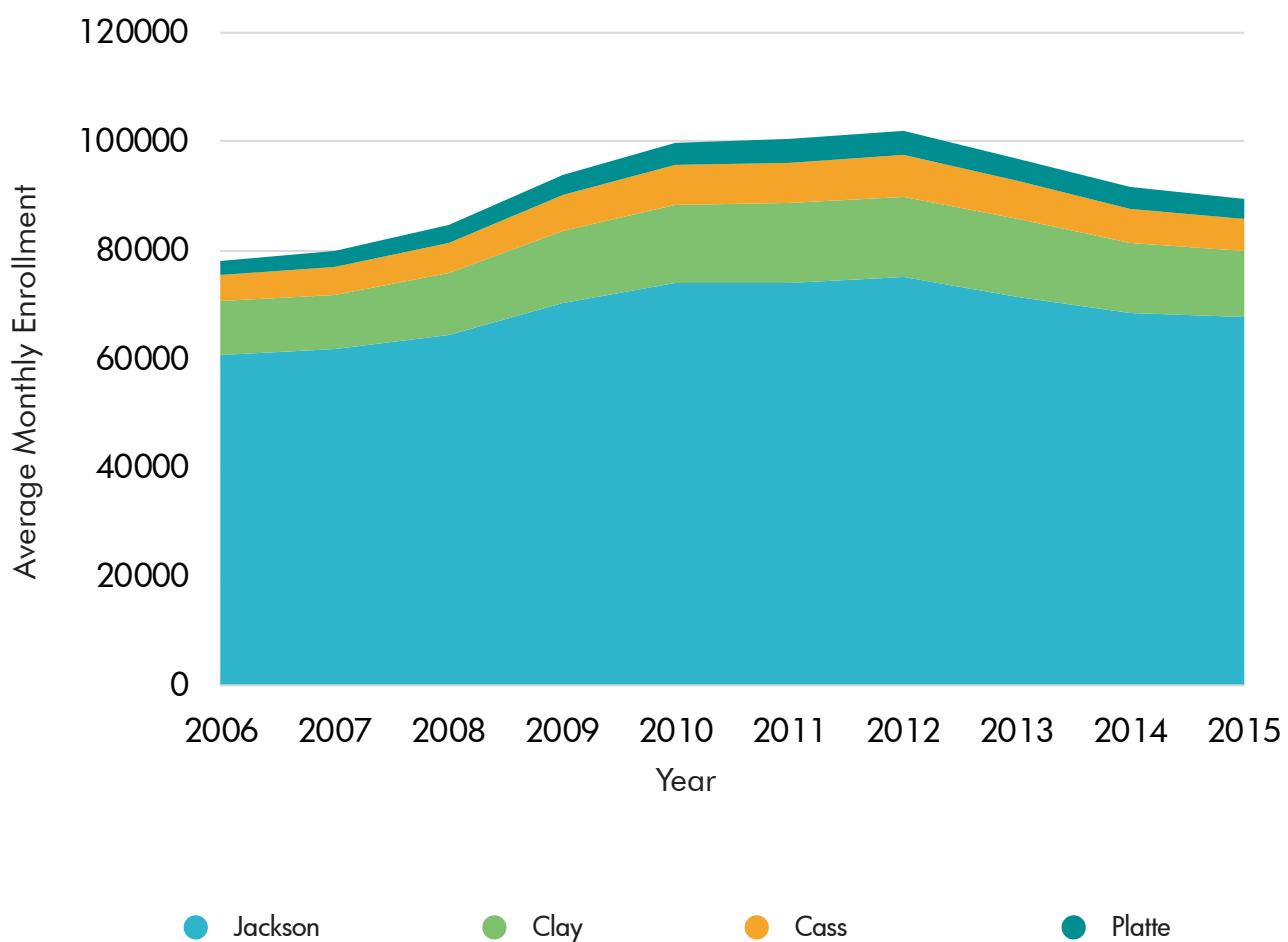
**Average Monthly Enrollment of Children
in the Kansas Food Assistance Program**



In recent years, fewer individuals enrolled in the Kansas Food Assistance Program. Enrollment rose during and immediately after the Great Recession.

Food Assistance

Average Monthly Enrollment of Children in Missouri Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



Similar to the trend in Kansas, the number of children in Jackson, Clay, Cass and Platte counties receiving SNAP benefits declined between 2012 and 2015.

EARLY LEARNING



Research makes it clear that the first five years are critical to build the foundation for children's later school success. Investing in the early years leads to better outcomes for children, families and the economy. Research shows that every dollar invested in early childhood education saves up to \$13 in future social costs, leading to lower crime rates, fewer adults on public assistance, fewer teen pregnancies, and a stronger, more prepared workforce.

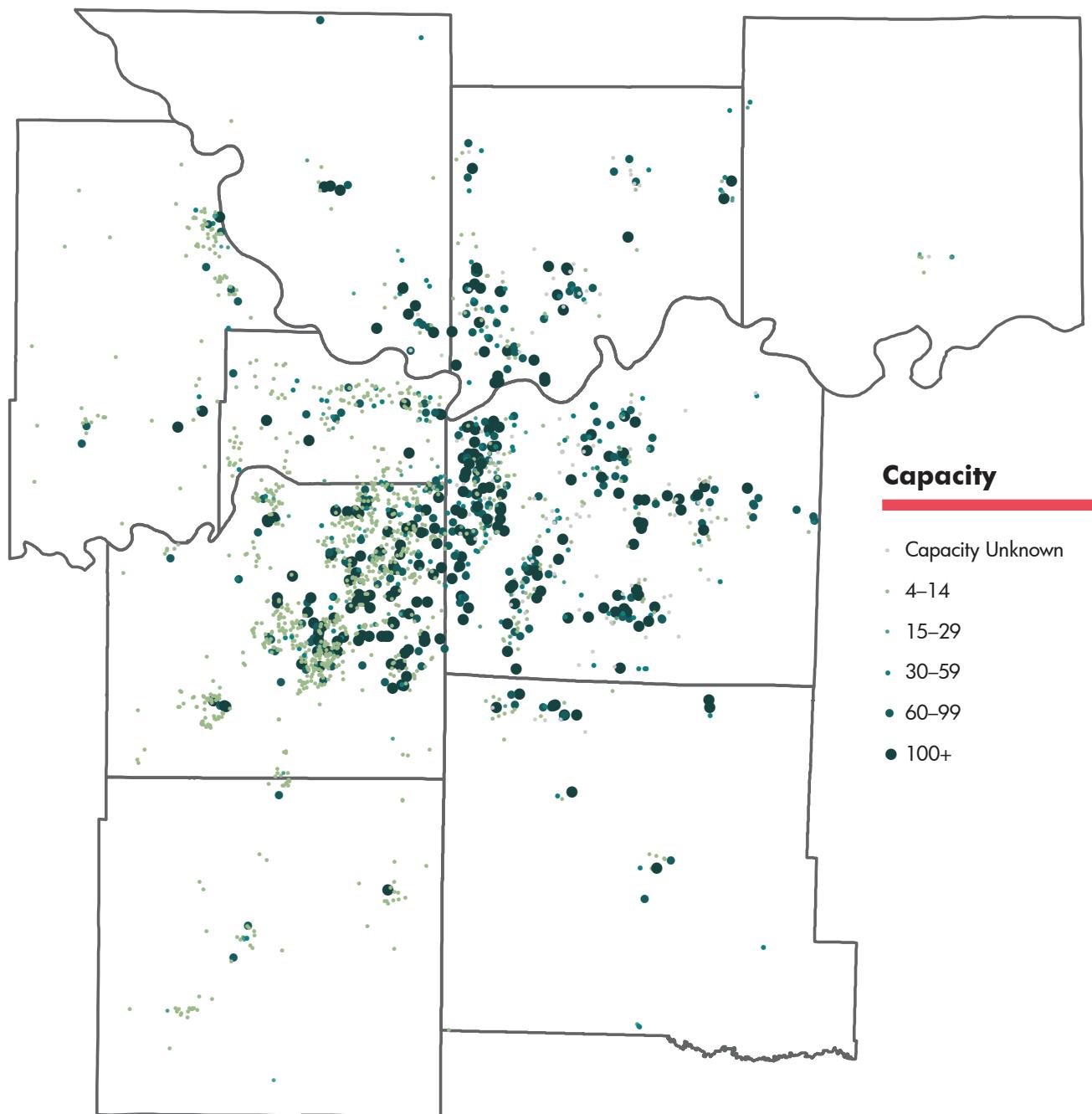
Topics in this section include:

- Location and capacity of child care facilities.
- Child care deserts.
- Children in child care receiving state assistance.
- Child care employment trends.
- Annual wage for child care workers.



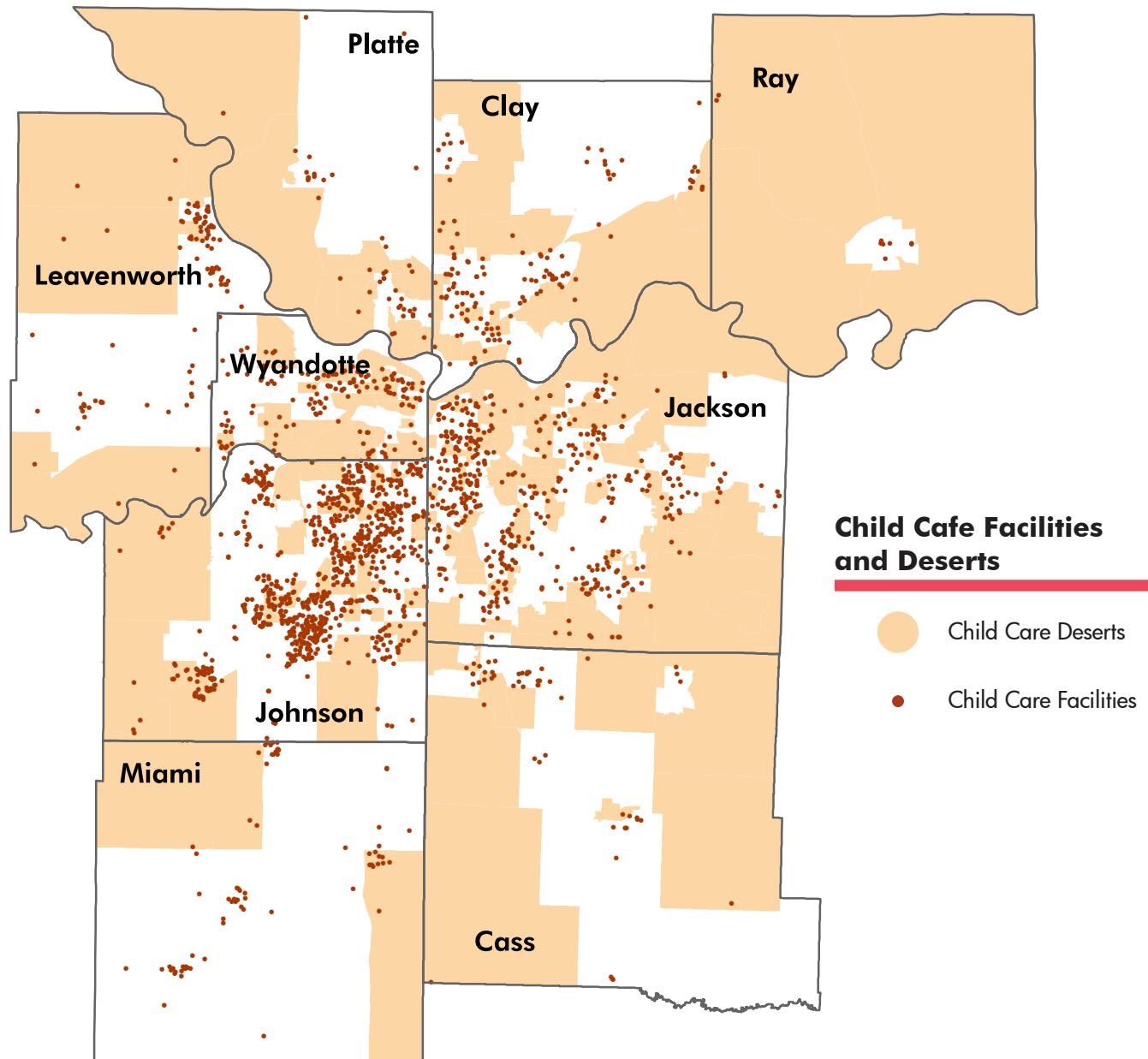
EARLY LEARNING

Child Care Facilities



In the Kansas City region, nearly 1,900 facilities provide child care. Center sizes vary from greatly. Some serve as few as one child and some serve nearly 1,000 children.

Child Care Deserts



Despite the large number of facilities, there are communities lacking easily accessible child care. Child care deserts are common in rural parts of the Kansas City region. Also, there are several pockets, particularly in the urban core and first-ring suburbs, with fewer child care options.

EARLY LEARNING

State Assistance for Child Care

Kansas Counties	Number of Children in Child Care Receiving Monthly State Assistance
Johnson	1,405
Leavenworth	331
Miami	202
Wyandotte	1,165

Missouri Counties	Number of Children in Child Care Receiving Monthly State Assistance
Cass	453
Clay	758
Jackson	5,674
Platte	211
Ray	13

The cost of child care can be prohibitive for many parents. In 2017, the average annual cost of full-time care for an infant in a Missouri child care center was \$8,632. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal program that supports state-level funding of child care programs for qualifying families. Without this assistance, quality child care options would be out of reach for many at-risk and low-income families in the Kansas City region.

Nationwide, the average eligible income for subsidized child care is 180 percent of the federal poverty level. Kansas offers eligibility for families up to 185 percent but Missouri's child care assistance program has long been lower than most other states. Subsidy reimbursement rates for providers in many regions of the state are still below 75 percent of the actual market rates for child care. These lower rates make it difficult for providers to serve subsidy-eligible children.

Available Programs by County

Kansas

Types of Centers	Johnson	Leavenworth	Miami	Wyandotte
Preschools	7	5	4	2
Licensed Centers	189	18	6	37
Licensed Exempt Centers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Accredited Centers	11	2	0	1
Group Homes	182	46	31	67
Family Child Care	470	35	41	51
Accredited Homes	0	0	0	0

Missouri

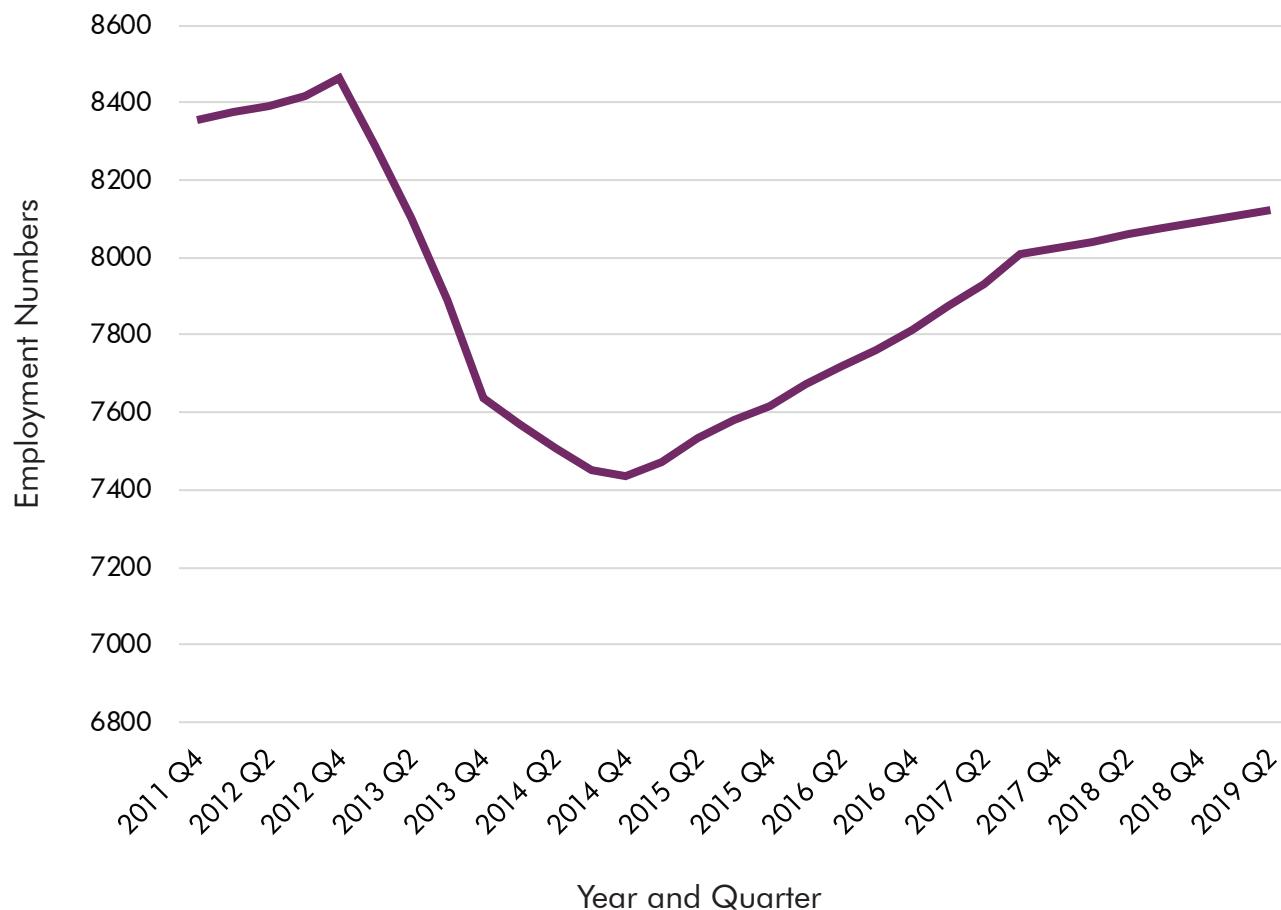
Types of Centers	Cass	Clay	Jackson	Platte	Ray
Preschools	4	16	41	4	4
Licensed Centers	19	52	195	15	2
Licensed Exempt Centers	5	15	54	8	2
Accredited Centers	3	11	37	4	0
Group Homes	1	0	6	0	0
Family Child Care	19	33	114	10	1
Accredited Homes	1	0	1	1	0

The quality of early learning programs in Greater Kansas City varies greatly. The region has programs that meet the minimum state and local health and safety requirements, programs that are engaged in national and state accreditation efforts, state-sponsored preschool programs, and nationally funded programs like Head Start.

EARLY LEARNING

Employment Trends

Child Care Worker Employment



In the Kansas City region, employment for child care workers trended upwards after dipping in 2013 and 2014. The dip in employment in 2013 was significant and it does not match national trends.

Wages

Comparison of Wages for Child Care Workers to Other Professions



The median annual salary for a child care worker in the Kansas City region is \$20,400. By comparison, the median annual salary of all occupations in the Kansas City region is \$40,700. Entry-level child care workers can expect to make \$17,200 a year and experienced child care workers take home \$24,100 a year.

RESOURCES

Data and information for this report came from the following resources:

- American Fact Finder, U.S. Census Bureau.
- Center on the Developing Child.
- Child Care Aware Missouri.
- Child Care Aware Kansas.
- JobsEQ
 - Website: <http://www.chmuraecon.com/jobseq>
 - Data accessed in June 2018
 - Company: Chmura
- Kansas State Department of Education.
- Kids Count.
 - Website: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- National Center for Children in Poverty.



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